



Sincerely yours,
Mrs. Flewellyn.

TO

Mrs. Clara A. Weaver

THIS BOOK

IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

HILL-CREST.

BY

MRS. FLEWELLYN.

"O love! so hallowing every soil
That gives the sweet flower room,
Wherever nursed by ease or toil
The human heart takes bloom.
Plant of lost Eden from the soil
Of sinful earth unriven,
White blossom of the trees of God
Dropped down to us from heaven."—*Whittier.*

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PREFACE.

IN olden times when friend would send message to friend, he took from the cote a dove, and concealing under its wing the little missive, opened the window and sent it forth, to carry the words of love or warning; and I doubt not that many a fervent prayer went up into the blue heavens after the quivering pinions, that the bird's flight might be attended with safety.

Dear reader, from the cote of my experience, where is gathered my own bitter trials—my memories, my loves, my ambition—I have taken this little book, and with a tender prayer for its safe arrival, have sent it forth. Under its wing is the message I would have you read; it is tied with the thread of a story; it lies close to the warm, throbbing heart of humanity,

hidden among the soft feathers of love and unselfish friendship.

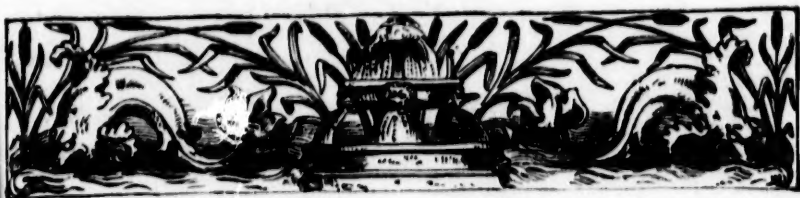
As it comes to your window tapping for admittance, do not stop to look at its storm-beaten plumage, or question the advisability of taking into your own cosy dove-cote this strange pilgrim of the air.

The message, I say, is hidden ; and if after a careful search you find and take into your life the sweet lesson, and it brings to your heart the peace and happiness it has brought to mine, I will be forever thankful that I said to the little book, "Go forth."

THE AUTHOR.



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HILL-CREST.

CHAPTER I.

HILL-CREST.



THE house was old and fast going to decay ; nothing had been done in the way of repairs for the last quarter of a century. The hill on which it stood would have furnished an eligible site for a palace, whose outlines, viewed from any direction, would have stood out in relief against the sky ; and this prominence made all the more marked the ravages of time and the lack of harmony with the surrounding landscape. The present owner had built it according to his means (a very commendable thing to do) when the land was cheap, but competent workmen hard to get ; and having lived there comfortably so long, he was determined, notwithstanding flattering offers to sell, that he would end his days in the same conspicuous habitation.

The house, I say, was old. In the time of which I write, the rough-cast, as it was called, had begun to get tired of clinging to the lathing so long, and had

broken off in large patches here and there, giving the old house a most forlorn appearance. The rooms, large and with low ceilings, had an air of cosy homeliness easy to feel, but hard to describe. Between the front of the house and the street, from which three steps led up to the gate, was a little yard, filled in summer with all the old-fashioned varieties of flowers, from spider-eye and bachelor button to hearts-a-bleeding and bottles-of-all-colors. But the ornament of the ancient dwelling was the sweet jessamine that completely covered its walls. The long graceful vines wound themselves lovingly around the small-paned windows, and reached up to the roof in a protecting way as if it felt some of the family pride in trying to conceal from inquisitive eyes the real state of delapidation into which the beloved old home had fallen.

At the back of the house all was different ; the hill sloped away from the stone basement, leaving the doors and windows too far up to coax a vine or shrub to reach even the lower casement. Some lilac bushes had been planted in the hope of covering at least the stone wall, but the dryness of the earth at so high an eminence and the strong west winds had been too much for even these hardy bushes to get above a stunted growth. The doer on this side was like an observatory, yielding a view of the farms and factories, streams and bridges, miles away into the distance. The old grist-mill lying in the valley, with its very high chimney, seemed like a doll's house, and the pond at the side a small dish of water.

A narrow, crooked lane ran along one side of the grounds down into the hollow, where it turned and came out by the mill, and joined the main street of the village, with its stores and hotels. So you see that Hill-Crest stood high and dry, not only above its neighbors, but out of the way of the small bustle that was going on in this thrifty little town.

In winter the boys and girls of the village would bring their sleds and ride down hill by the hour, filling the frosty air with their merry shouts; and on moonlight nights the hill was one moving mass of humanity, many of the neighbors, whose youth was long past, heartily joining in the sport, which, they declared, did them more good than a doctor's prescription.

I will not attempt to describe the inside of the house, or to give you a glimpse of the home life, until you have had an introduction to its inmates.

Robert McDonell was an Irishman by birth, but coming to America when a young man, and marrying a woman of American birth and parentage, he had very soon dropped his native habits, and with that adaptability so characteristic of his countrymen, became an American in every sense of the word, loving the land of his adoption with a loyal patriotism that is often found wanting in those born on her soil. He had never gained much of this world's goods. Perhaps it was in part due to his feeling no need of many luxuries, and having no yearning for power or fame, he lived an honest, industrious life, free from the care and strife that is sure to surround one of higher aspirations. He and his four

motherless daughters and a maiden sister of his wife constituted the household. We say that his daughters were motherless, but Aunt Elizabeth, who had lived with them so long, always declared, when the subject was mentioned, that they had lost nothing in that particular, as she had made so many sacrifices for them and had done so much for their comfort that she was at a loss to know what people meant who sympathized with them. Elizabeth Williams was a "character," a little past middle age, but so well preserved that she would easily be taken for no more than thirty, tall and graceful, with black eyes and hair, a clear complexion, and withal that air of queenly dignity which impressed one at first sight with the idea that her life had been spent in wealth and ease. How much she supplied a mother's place in that home our story will serve to determine.

Kathey, the eldest of the McDonell girls, was the beauty of the family, and consequently the aunt's favorite. She was of medium height, with brown, curling hair and roguish blue eyes, a perfectly rounded form, and so graceful of movement as to draw more than a passing glance. Her father always called her Kathleen, looking at her sometimes in a way that led one to surmise that some other Kathleen in the long ago,—perhaps a sister or a friend—had something to do with his christening his first-born by that most poetical of names.

Edith, the second daughter, was just as unlike her sister as it was possible for anyone to be; tall and slender, with a grave, gentle face, dreamy blue eyes,

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and a broad, low forehead. There was about her an air of languor, but never of impatience, and she was ever ready to take up the next task in life with a self-forgetful diligence that made for her so many friends not only among her own sisters, for whom she always found plenty to do, but also among the sick or suffering in all the neighborhood. She was eighteen and Kathey twenty, and though so unlike in look and temperament, they were always the best of friends, clinging together as only motherless girls will, each preferring the other, and yielding to the other the claim of possessing the more beauty.

Next to Edith, comes Grace. She may be described as a model of perfect physical health and strength, just the right height for her weight of about one hundred and thirty-five pounds; plump but not fat; fair but not chalky; rosy but not red; her eyes were dark hazel, and her beautiful hair closely wound about her head. Imagine this picture and you have a perfect conception of what Grace McDonell was at sixteen years of age. In manner she had a certain habit of throwing back her head when engaged in conversation, which gave you the impression that she was pleased with the whole world, and with herself in particular.

The youngest of the four girls was Berthy. Nature had evidently exhausted her gifts of grace and beauty on the three elder sisters, and nothing remained for Berthy but a muddy dark complexion and a lot of black hair, always frowsy and untidy. She was fifteen years old, but anyone would have supposed

her several years younger, for she was so small. As the youngest of the family she should have been the pet and favorite; on the other hand, she was generally neglected by all, and as a result she had formed the habit of going off by herself, making companions of the flowers, talking to imaginary friends, and building innumerable air castles. This was why she was called "a queer child."

It was Berthy who gave to their home, in one of her flights of romantic fancy, the name of Hill-Crest, making all the family roar with laughter at the idea of so high-sounding a title for their rather shabby homestead.

I have said that Robert McDonell did not care for riches, but he was the only member of the family so minded. While the girls did value their own good names "as above rubies," yet there were times when the economy they were obliged to practice was very galling to their proud natures. But they never said anything to convey the idea to their father that they were not contented with the home he had provided for them; and he, coming home at nightfall and finding everything cheerful and pleasant, did not stop to think that nearly all the comforts of his home were due to the busy hands of the daughters he was priding himself on supporting in comfort and ease.

It was Grace's willing hands and strong arms that hung the paper in the little parlor and made the carpet that covered the floors, and with the money that Kathey had earned in making a dress for a friend who had admired one of her own which her deft

fingers had planned, she had bought the dainty pictures and white curtains; and Edith had netted a few tidies and lambrequins, and so, with the bright polished grate and a home-made vase filled with dried ferns and cat-tails which Berthy had gathered, the parlor presented quite a cosy appearance. But when friends complimented the girls on their success, Aunt Elizabeth would lean back in her easy chair and tell them how hard she had worked and planned to bring it about, and end by saying that she did not know what the girls, poor dears, would do if anything happened that she should be obliged to leave them. They all understood perfectly well what the anything was that she was referring to, and often wondered themselves why she did not marry and have a home of her own, seeing that she was such an excellent manager.

Hill-Crest never looked more beautiful than on the June morning of which I write, with the jasmine in full bloom and the sun just peeping at the wild morning-glories that grew abundantly around the east wing of the house. The dainty bell-shaped flowers came out in great profusion long before the dew had dried on leaf or stem. How much these flowers remind us of our own plans and aspirations; how confident we are sometimes that we will show to the world all that we think or feel that we are able to do; and how like the sharp rays of the sun are the criticisms that wither by word and glance our best efforts, until in a little while our hopes are all dead as the flowers are faded and forgotten; but the seed germ is there still, which the blazing sun serves only to ripen and make fit for the time of gathering by-and-by.

Berthy was up early that morning. She did not always rise early, for although she loved the early morning, and would have liked to spend this most delightful time communing with the birds and flowers, yet there was always plenty of work to be done, and, as there was no servant, a large share fell upon her unwilling shoulders. But this morning she was sure that she had heard her father and Kathey talking about a letter and some one coming, and after her father had gone she had heard Kathey sighing several times in a way that had awakened her pity. Stimulated, too, by a little natural curiosity, she was anxious to see what it was all about; the first thing that caught her eye was the letter, and as there are never any secrets in the McDonell household, we will just look on while Berthy eagerly reads it.

“GREEN CLIFF.

“*Dear Brother,*—It seems a long time since I have heard anything from you or your family, in fact, not since Kathey was here two years ago. I supposed, of course, the young people would keep up the correspondence, but it seems they have not, and you realize, I am sure, that my time is fully occupied. I write now to ask if it would be convenient to have Geraldine and Roger stay with you for a while during the warm weather. They think it would be a great benefit to their health and spirits to spend the summer in the hilly region of your home.

“Please send reply at your earliest convenience, and oblige,
Your Brother,

“WILLIAM McDONELL.”

To say that Berthy was delighted is but to give a

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faint idea of that young lady's ecstasy. She admired and almost revered a person of education, and she knew that Roger had just returned from college, and having herself such a limited knowledge of college students, she supposed he would be continually talking of what he had learned while there. So holding the letter still in her hand, she flew into the kitchen where Kathey had called her sisters together to talk the matter over, and was very much surprised to find that what had caused her so much joy was a source of grief to the older ones. Kathey was saying as she entered, "I did not want to hurt father's feelings by saying we could not have them, for you know how fond he is of his brother, although they don't see each other as often as they might."

"Well," said Grace in her practical way, "we shall have to go right to work and get ready for them, that is all."

"But you girls do not know," said Kathey in a distressed tone, "how perfectly grand *their* place is, with servants, and horses and carriages; and Geraldine is one of the kind that really despises a person who is poor and has to work for a living. You remember my telling you that she said if she were poor and had to work she would shut herself up in a room and starve to death," and Kathey wiped her eyes with so forlorn a look that it seemed as if the starving process would not cause as much agony as she was called on to endure at this moment.

Robert McDonell's brother William had begun life in the same humble way as he had, and the woman he

married was as poor as himself. But about five years before my story opens a rich, miserly old uncle of Mrs. McDonell had died and left her the whole of his property. They had two children at the time, a daughter and a son. What William McDonell lacked in business ability, he made up in conceit. He wanted the whole country to believe him a much wealthier man than he was; so he built a beautiful residence, hired an army of servants, his own family not lifting so much as a hand to wait upon themselves. While there were plenty to partake of Mr. McDonell's hospitality, still there were some hard-headed business men who knew that the factory he owned could not warrant such a system of extravagance, and predicted a "come down" in the near future. If Mr. McDonell had any forebodings he did not take any one into his confidence, or deign to receive any advice or interference in the matter of his affairs; and so we find him at this time, to all appearance, a very prosperous manufacturer, with a supreme disdain for those less fortunate than himself. It is not surprising therefore that the younger members of his brother's family thought of their rich uncle as a being whom Providence had especially favored.

"If we could get some new things before they come," suggested Grace, in a more subdued manner, "we could manage the work all right. I could do the cleaning, and Berthy could do a good share of the cooking, and Kathey and Edith could entertain the company."

"But how are we to get the new things?" said Edith,

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her sad face looking a shade paler. "You know that Aunt Elizabeth says she has got to have her new silk dress this week, and have it made, and that will take all of the money that father can spare and all of Kathey's time to make it."

"Just let Aunt Elizabeth wait for her dress, the selfish old thing," said Berthy, speaking up for the first time. When she did speak, she always talked until she was through, no matter how much her sisters tried to hush her, and there was no exception this time. There never was any love between Aunt Elizabeth and Berthy. Aunt Elizabeth could not admire her looks, and with a nature like hers where beauty was everything, it was no wonder that she grew to hate the uncomely girl, and that Berthy, with a child's quick perception, saw why she was disliked, and also its unreasonableness. Accordingly her fiery temper often blazed out in a way that fairly frightened her more docile sisters, and although she repented in secret for her harsh and bitter words, yet there was no time in which she felt free to confess her contrition, and so the natural gulf kept widening until it had grown impassable.

Of course it had to be settled that the cousins would come, for the father wanted them, and that was enough. He had left orders that morning that the required invitation be sent, and when later in the day Kathey and Aunt Elizabeth went out to select the new dress, Berthy was asked to answer the letter, and to be sure to give them a warm welcome. She did not need this last injunction, for being so interested

in the college youth she was only too glad to have them come.

In due time the letter was written, and Berthy, in some measure wanting to make up for their poverty, gave them a hearty welcome, using all the high-flowing language of which she had command, and finished by saying "Welcome, thrice welcome to Hill-Crest."

Kathey had no idea what kind of letter Berthy would write. She knew it would contain an earnest invitation from a true heart, and that is why she had asked her to write it; for she could not bring herself to do so hypocritical a thing as ask any one to come to her home whom she did not want. When she returned home that afternoon and found that the letter had been written and despatched, she gave herself no more uneasiness on the subject.

It was late in the day before Berthy had finished her last household task and was free to roam at her will. The sun was just setting as she ran down the winding hill path, and reaching the little stile below the well, she could not help pausing to admire the scene. Before her all was green and beautiful; from her seat no home but her own was wholly visible, but the chimnies of others could be seen here and there peeping through the trees. Even the white trodden path down the hillside looked to her (who had seen so little that was beautiful) so picturesque that she fell to wondering why her sisters and aunt were so discontented with everything about the place.

"If we had a new house like Mrs. Parker's would they like it any better?" she asked herself. "I

would not, and Mrs. Parker said, when she asked me for sunflower seed and holly-hock roots, that her place looked so new it made her home-sick. Why are people always wanting something they cannot get? I have often heard the girls say how nice it would be if Uncle William and Geraldine and Roger would be more friendly with us."

Berthy remembered well her cousin Roger, who had visited them more than five years ago. He was fond of teasing her, but she liked him, and when she heard that his father had become rich, she was glad for his sake, not thinking it would make the slightest difference in their friendship. But she had never seen him since, although his home was only twenty miles away, and Roger had promised her if he ever got rich he would buy a horse and come to see her every week. Then she thought of the time when she heard he had gone to college; somehow she always cried when thinking of that. It was hard for her not to be able to have those advantages which make a person good and wise, and it filled her rebellious little heart with bitter thoughts, robbing the landscape and her beloved Hill-Crest of all its beauty.

The sun had set and the twilight had deepened into dusk, and Berthy was still sitting on the little step that crossed the fence into the lane, her head leaning against the high post. She did not hear the light footsteps coming down the walk until a grey-gloved hand was laid on her hair in a caressing way, and a soft voice said close to her ear, "What is thee dreaming about?"

"Oh! is it you? I did not hear you coming," said Berthy, dashing the tears from her cheeks for fear her Quaker friend would see them and ask why they were there. But it was nearly dark, so she was able to hide the traces of her emotion, and she told Mrs. Kenyon of the news at their house, and also explained that she had started to pay her a call but had sat so long on the fence that she guessed she would go in now, because it was almost bedtime. Mrs. Kenyon thought so, too, and so they parted.



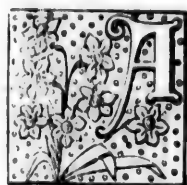
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CHAPTER II.

MRS. KENYON.



AS Mrs. Kenyon will appear several times in connection with the inmates of Hill-Crest, it may be well to give the reader a glimpse of her life. Her maiden name was Peabody. Her father, a minister in the Society of Friends, took great care that his children should learn early in life not only to believe in God, but to trust in His omnipotent love and power; and while he taught them that toil was necessary and beneficial, yet his words to them were always, "Be careful for nothing." One of the favorite pictures in Mrs. Kenyon's house had been given her by her father, and represented a field of exquisitely-colored lilies, with a group of angels hovering over them, while beneath was the inscription "Behold the lilies."

Prudence had grown up with the consciousness of God's watchful care over her so much that now as she began to look forward to life's close, it was not with regret over a life of disappointment and loss, but ever with the feeling that in some way she had

been a part of God's great plan, working through her for His own great glory and *her* present and future peace and happiness.

Three beautiful children had blessed her union with Henry Kenyon, a Quaker, like herself. Two of them had been laid to rest with the father in the quiet cemetery, and the remaining one, a girl of seventeen, was all that was left to cheer the mother in her loneliness, although through the unselfishness of the Christian woman's heart, the daughter had been allowed to attend an academy many miles distant, that she might receive an education such as would fit her for self-maintenance, which her mother knew would be necessary.

When Mr. Kenyon died he left his wife a small life annuity, and the deed of the house and lot she now occupied. Her home during his life had been in Philadelphia, and she had many warm friends there, but when she came to Summerville to dispose of her property she liked the location so well, it seemed pleasant and homelike, that she decided to stay. Accordingly we find her at this time of writing an inmate of the pretty cottage nestled among the trees by the little brook which furnishes the mills and factories with water power, then, flushed with its own importance, it rushes noisily past Mrs. Kenyon's parlor window, on through the adjoining meadow, and away out of sight to other fields of usefulness.

Mrs. Kenyon had not lived long in the Brook-side cottage before she made the acquaintance of Berthy McDonell. One day when out in her little garden

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she heard some one crying, and following the sound had come close to the fence which with a narrow strip of land divided the brook from her own grounds. There, sitting on a mossy stone close by the water's edge, was a little girl that looked not more than ten (although she was fourteen years old at that time), with her face buried in her hands, weeping in a most uncontrollable manner. Mrs. Kenyon knew in a moment that the girl had come here to be alone, and therefore she did not disturb her until she had gone through the gate and sat down by her side, then taking one of her hands from her face, said, in that sweet, coaxing way that was so natural to her—the same gentle tones she had always used to her own little ones :

“Tell me, my dear, what troubles thee ?”

It was like the voice of an angel to Berthy, and in her wild impulsive way she at once told this kind woman all of her troubles, how she wanted to go to school, and had to stay at home and do the housework ; and how hard she tried to be good, and what a miserable failure she made of it ; and what a bad temper she had, and how she thought sometimes that her sisters hated her ; and added that she did not care if Aunt Elizabeth did, because she did not want her to like her. She poured out her grief in a torrent of words that nearly took the breath of the quiet little Quaker woman.

Mrs. Kenyon let her talk until her very vehemence had exhausted her. When she stopped, after saying she could not be good, Mrs. Kenyon said in the

simplest manner possible, "Did thee ever ask God to help thee to be good?" This was something entirely new to Berthy. Of course she thought she knew all about God and religion, and if she had been asked if she said her prayers, could have answered promptly that they were never forgotten. She could have said further that her father always attended church. He had never asked any of his daughters to go with him, perhaps thinking of that subject as he did of education, that it was not needed for girls. Be that as it may, Berthy never had so direct a question put to her, or one that seemed so hard to answer. I do not know that she expected Mrs. Kenyon to speak at all; she was glad to have some one to tell her own troubles to, but when her listener spoke, there was a tone of mild reproof in her voice that seemed to say, "Are you sure you have left nothing undone on your part?" In an instant her tears were dried, although their traces were plainly visible on her reddened cheeks. After thinking a few minutes, she said honestly, "Would that do any good?"

"He is our Father, thee knows," said Mrs. Kenyon, "and has promised to hear His children when they cry unto Him. Thee is trusting Him every moment of thy life."

"Oh," said Berthy, "I am not trusting Him at all. I do not know how to trust Him."

"Is thee not sure the sun will rise to-morrow, and is not God able to manage thy little, unruly heart as well as this great universe?"

It was all so plain and so easily understood that

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Berthy wondered why she had never thought of it in that light before. She sat for a long time looking away off over the fields, but not seeing anything before her eyes. All she could think of was the heart that Mrs. Kenyon had spoken of, and she remembered how often it had ached, and how she had wished she knew of some one who she was sure loved her, and who would be patient enough to listen to what seemed to her the experience of a very sad life. But then this dear woman had not offered herself as a friend, but just simply pointed to God in so confident a way that Berthy seemed for a moment to forget her very existence, so intent was she thinking of her great need of that help which had been held out to her.

With a long, quivering sigh she turned and looked at her companion, and a half smile lit up her face as she said, "I thank you, ma'am, for speaking so kindly to me; I feel better now, and think I will go home. Would you mind telling me how I can ask God to make my heart better?" There was something so childlike and innocent in the question that it made Mrs. Kenyon feel for a moment as if she herself was not competent to direct this young disciple to Christ. But remembering the blessed words, "My grace is sufficient for thee," she put her arm tenderly around the little girl, and told her of the many times in her own life when the way had seemed dark, how she had found Jesus such a precious friend, and that alone in her closet, it did not matter what language she used, for she knew that God was looking in the heart, and if we only trust Him He will do more for us than we are able to ask.

The touch of the hand, and the pressure of the encircling arm was so new and sweet to the tired, excited child that she was completely overcome and dropping her head on the shoulder of the little Quakeress her tears burst forth again, but this time they were refreshing, and relieved her overburdened heart.

Mrs. Kenyon held her there long after the sobbing had ceased, and then did not seem in any hurry to release her. Taking out her own dainty handkerchief to wipe the tear-stained face, and giving her a little pat on the cheek, she said cheerfully, "Now run home, dear, and when thee feels sad next time seek thy closet instead of this lonely place; but always remember that God is able and willing to hear thee."

It is unnecessary to add that after this interview Mrs. Kenyon and Berthy became the best of friends. The meeting at the brookside was never mentioned between them, but each felt that the other remembered it, for Berthy knew that the books her friend gave her to read were selected with especial reference to her need; and Mrs. Kenyon saw that Berthy was making a superhuman effort to control her temper and also to learn all the precepts and to heed the gentle reproofs she had given her.

Almost every evening after her work was done Berthy would run down the lane, if only for a few minutes, to talk with Mrs. Kenyon, who soon learned to know from the expressive face of her visitor how things were going at home, and though asking no questions could soon draw out a confession of some

hard-fought battle in which she was sometimes victorious, but oftener defeated.

Her sisters could not imagine why Berthy so much enjoyed her new friend's society, and Aunt Elizabeth said boldly that she ought to be kept away from there, as there never was any style or pride about that "young one," and it would not improve her any to be associated with that plain old woman. But the "plain old woman" did not hear any of these remarks, and the sisters and father were not interested enough in the "young one" to care very much; consequently the intimacy was kept up to the great joy of Berthy and the entire satisfaction of Mrs. Kenyon.

After Aunt Elizabeth's new dress had been bought and made, her interest in the expected guests revived somewhat and she told the girls that they indeed had nothing fit to entertain those people with (a fact they very well knew), and she was surprised that their father would expect them to make the attempt. It always hurt them to hear anything said which seemed to cast a reflection on their hard-working father. But Miss Elizabeth Williams did not think it necessary to be careful in her selection of words when anything disturbed her peace of mind, and there was nothing that could so effectually upset her accustomed tranquility of temper as the thought of having to endure what she was pleased to term "a domestic disgrace."

She became so excited and miserable on the subject, declaring that she must either speak to Robert or

write to Green Cliff and tell them not to come, that Kathey finally persuaded her to go on a long-promised visit to her cousins in New York and stay the entire summer, in which case *she* at least would be spared the humiliation the remaining members of the family were compelled to undergo. So, taking another portion from the already much depleted treasury she started on her journey, saying to her friends, when bidding them good-bye, that she had worked so hard and had so much care on her mind that this visit was absolutely necessary, hinting that it was according to her physician's orders that she was going, although no medical man during the past five years had had an opportunity even to think of her, so perfect had been her health.

After the departure of this relative the work of getting ready went on with greater rapidity and success, now that the most glaring points of poverty were in a measure allowed to be forgotten and the contrast likely to be noticed by the more favored guests not spoken of so often. The girls began the preparations as though they were delighted with the prospect of the addition to their home circle. Many things had to be changed and made over to present a suitable appearance, and they all worked with a will, even Mr. McDonell taking hold with an unusual enthusiasm, perhaps learning for the first time how much he was indebted to his daughters' ingenuity and good taste for his home comforts.

Time passed very rapidly, and the end of June was reached. The first of July had been the time men-

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tioned for the arrival of the cousins. Among those at Hill-Crest who had worked hardest to make the old house presentable was Berthy. It seemed that she was responsible for their coming, as she was the only one that from the beginning had anticipated any pleasure in the event. What delightful days those were to her, getting ready for real summer visitors. All the objectionable bits of furniture and odd pieces of old china that were used in the household for economy's sake had been carefully packed away, and the best and newest of everything brought out and displayed to the greatest advantage. It gave the home she loved such a holiday appearance that whatever she was asked to do she did it promptly and well. Her sisters wondered sometimes what could have happened to Berthy to make her so unusually industrious, but they had no time to speculate on so insignificant a subject, so it passed for the most part unnoticed.

All through the busy weeks of toil Kathey had seemed so depressed in spirits that at last Edith could stand it no longer, and putting her arms around her one night when they had retired to their room after a hard day's work, she asked her if she was tired out, or what was the matter, that made her so unlike her usual bright self. Of course, Edith realized that the strain on her sister's nerves had been very great, taking the care, as she had been compelled to do, all through the planning and fixing that had been going on. Still she thought that beneath all the present anxiety there was some other reason why her

face had continually worn that sad, dejected look. This had been a very great mystery to her most anxious sister, and she had kept silent on the subject as long as she could, giving Kathey, as she supposed, time and opportunity to unburden her heart. As time went on and the cloud seemed to grow darker instead of passing away, as Edith had hoped it would, she had on the night mentioned made bold to ask her sister what it was all about, and the "ice being broken," Kathey gladly told the sympathizing one all that oppressed her and made her so miserable.

When two years before she had visited at her Uncle's home, she had become acquainted with a young man whose name was Harold Huntington. He and his invalid mother lived in a beautiful residence not far from Green Cliff, in a lovely retired spot near the lake, surrounded by delightful grounds and every comfort that his immense wealth and exquisite taste could provide.

He had formed one of the party which Kathey and her cousins were invited to join; the chief pleasure of the day had consisted in horse-back riding, and as Kathey was the only girl of the company who had dared to mount his spirited young horse, they had become very good friends.

They had about four miles to ride on the smooth country road, and when the party was all ready, and when it was discovered that none of the young ladies present but Kathey could be persuaded to ride this high-mettled steed, it was settled at once that no less a personage than the rich and talented Harold Huntington, of Lake View, would be her escort.

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And what a day this proved to Kathey. The weather was delightful, riding one of her favorite sports, and then with the novelty of this first taste of the congenial society for which she had longed, and a gallant beau at her side, it seemed like a dream of fairy land. As the horse felt the touch of her dainty whip, he plunged forward in a way that made all the timid lady equestrians utter little screams of fright.

Kathey was too well balanced, and, in fact, too happy to allow so small a thing to upset her, so settling herself more firmly in the saddle, she gave the horse another slight tap with her whip, and away she went flying down the road before any of the gentlemen could even reach her side. But the spirited, handsome beast was well broken, and as soon as he found that his master was on his back, he became as docile as one could desire. After Kathey had brought him into subjection, she turned round and cantered back to the surprised group, her cheeks flushed with excitement, her curls tossed into careless confusion, her laughing, roguish eyes sparkling with fun. She seemed the picture of girlish innocence and beauty, so at least Harold Huntington thought, as he rode up to her side and congratulated her on her "pluck." How he admired a brave woman, one who is not forever afraid of something. He was a great manly fellow himself, and was willing at all times to render service to the fair sex, but up to his present age, which was twenty-five, he had seen so much of the clinging sort of woman, who seemed to think she was born to be taken care of, and who

preferred an idle existence to active usefulness, that it was decidedly refreshing to see this young girl on a strong horse, bringing him under her control so completely. The young people of the party exchanged glances; they could easily see that this young lady had done in five minutes by her bravery what all the girls in the community had been trying to do for the last two years with beauty and flattery and money, and that was to win the heart of the young master of Lake View.

After that day Mr. Huntington was a frequent visitor at the home of William McDonell. When he first called, of course Geraldine went into the parlor to receive and entertain him, but after a few minutes he asked for Miss Kathey, and Geraldine discovered that he had not come to see her. Although she did not care particularly for him, still she knew it was the greatest wish of her father's life that she should marry Harold Huntington, and when he showed a decided preference for her cousin, it will not be wondered at that the whole family seemed a little cool towards her.

Kathey had come with the intention of staying several months. Mr. McDonell had said to his brother, when he invited her to his place, "Let the girl come, Rob; it will do her good, and perhaps she may make a good match, for there are a lot of young fellows around here, farmers' sons, you know, who would be able to give her a good home." Kathey had heard nothing of this and came because she was invited, and when her uncle had

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seemed to her a little distant, she did not know that he was afraid that she was making her match not quite to his liking, so she wrote to her father that she had stayed long enough and wanted to go home, and when she left she was not invited to come again.

The evening before she started for home, Mr. Huntington called and said to her, "I came to ask you to go with me to my home, my mother is anxious to see you, for she has heard you spoken of so often."

Kathey felt the blood rush to her face in a most uncomfortable way, but accepted the invitation. She did not exactly want to ask how his mother had heard anything about her, and so she turned the subject and said she was going home the next day. He seemed very much surprised, but after asking where her home was, and how she was going, he offered, in a very polite way, to take her, saying that Geraldine and Roger could go with them, and he would take the large carriage and his dappled team and driver. They would start very early so that he could be at his own home again at night, as his mother's health was so poor he did not want to leave her longer than a day.

Kathey liked the arrangement, and told him so in her own simple way, and so the plan was left to be settled by her cousin's consent, which she had no doubt would prove satisfactory. They had reached his home by this time, and a more delightful place it had never been Kathey's good fortune to see.

Two long rows of locust trees in full bloom

bordered the drive-way from the main road to the house, and the ground oyster shells that the horses were crunching under their feet, formed a glistening white road, which led up past the broad shady verandah. Everything was graceful and artistic. A large urn here filled to overflowing with some natural wild flowers, two or three rough grey stones in another place rolled together, held a beautiful pale-green fern spreading its thin hair-like leaves out to catch the sunshine, and a dark English ivy clinging around the carved posts of the upper balcony, all gave the impression of natural beauty.

Kathey's admiration was so genuine and undisguised that Harold could not help feeling that here was a nature fresh and pure, and it seemed to delight him to be able to give her a glimpse of all he had done in and around his home to make it the lovely place it was.

When Kathey had heard him spoken of as rich and talented, she did not ask in what line his talents ran. When she had spent an hour in his home, and had seen his work, sketches of landscapes, and bits of statuary, and had listened to his description of the work he had planned to do in the future, she did not need to ask why he was called talented.

His mother, she found in a darkened room, but with everything that loving hands could do, or a devoted son think of to bring comfort to one so fondly cherished; and when the pale invalid took her hand, and told her in her faint voice, how she had wanted to see her, and said, "I know I will like you, because Harold

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and myself always like the same people, our tastes are so much alike."

And then she referred to her love of flowers, and horses, and in every way gave Kathey to understand, much to her delight, that she had been made a subject of conversation between the mother and son. What did it all mean? She had not dared to ask herself why this young man had paid her so much attention since she came into his neighborhood, nor had she trusted herself to think how he had helped to make her visit the dream of bliss it had been. But when she heard his mother say so much about her, that none but he could possibly have told her, it flashed on Kathey's mind in a bewildering sense of ecstasy that she was to him perhaps more than a mere friend, and with it came the knowledge that henceforth this man would be a part of her very existence.

The gathering twilight hid the confused blushes that would have been almost unbearable to Kathey's sensitive nature. How long this pleasant visit might have lasted, or to what extent the mutual understanding might have been carried, we can never know, for just as the servant brought in the light, the rumble of wheels was heard, and Mr. McDonell's coachman was announced, saying he had been sent for Kathey, as some young ladies had called to bid her good-bye.

Harold insisted upon taking her home. But Kathey, knowing well how his mother depended on his company the long evening, said he should not

take the trouble, and added playfully that it would be too bad for James to take the empty carriage back to Green Cliff. So Harold handed her into her uncle's carriage, and bade her good-bye, pressing her hand in such a lover-like manner, that Kathey could not but know that had he been permitted to drive with her back to her uncle's, that perhaps——. She did not finish the thought, but leaned back in her seat and indulged in day dreams too pleasant, too sweet for description.

When Kathey arrived at the McDonell residence, the young ladies had grown tired of waiting for her and had gone home; and when she very naturally inquired who they were, Geraldine did not make her any satisfactory answer, and seemed so angry about something, that Kathey did not refer to the subject again.

Before the family retired for the night, Kathey thought it proper to mention the plan that had been arranged for her going home on the following day. It had seemed so delightful that it did not occur to her that any one could object, but no sooner had she mentioned it, than her uncle flew into a spasm of rage. Laying down the paper he had been reading since her entrance, he declared he would have no such foolishness going on, that he had plenty of horses to take her home, that they had brought her very comfortably, and it would seem very queer if they failed in strength so soon, adding, with that cutting sarcasm that only an Irishman knows how to command: "Of course my horses are not the blooded

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beasts that are in the Huntington stables, but they do me very well, perhaps because I have never been used to any better."

Kathey could not reply, and felt that in some way she had offended the whole family. Mrs. McDonell arose and swept out of the room, saying to her husband as she was going, "This is just what I expected, but you will never listen to me." Her remark enraged her spouse so much that he walked the floor backward and forward like a caged tiger; and yet he did not seem to care to tell why such a small incident had so shaken him up. But at last stopping in front of the nearly speechless Kathey, and looking at her over the top of his gold-rimmed glasses in a way that was calculated to impress her with the force of the command, said, "Miss Kathleen McDonell, you will find my carriage and horses at the door at six o'clock to-morrow morning; be ready to go home to your father at that time, and mind that you do not say anything to him of what has occurred to-night," and without any more words he left the room, of which Geraldine and her cousin were now the only occupants. There was a silence of about ten minutes. Kathey could only wonder about all this excitement, over what seemed to her a very natural thing to do.

She had been so happy in her friendship with Mr. Huntington that she did not fully realise until it had become so noticeable, that Roger had in her presence called his sister to account, saying, "Dene, what is the matter with you? Don't you know how

to treat any one decent?" To which Geraldine had answered, "If folks don't like me they know what they can do." And Kathey had decided then and there what she would do, and had written to her father accordingly.

As they sat in the parlor, Geraldine was the first to speak. "Kathey," she said, "it would be out of the question for you to take Mr. Huntington to your place, now that you have seen his home, I should think you would realise it. Just imagine his disgust after one look at that old tumble-down castle; he never knew us before we lived here, and he supposed we and all of our relations were rich, cultivated people. Of course you have not dressed very well since you came here, but then he might think that was the fault of your taste; but to take him to your place——. Oh! dear me, we shall be disgraced forever, and we brought you here for kindness, and now to think you would do so mean a thing is too bad, too bad." These words struck Kathey like the lash of a whip. No one could possibly feel the disgrace of poverty more keenly than she did, and the comparison of the old house at home with the elegant residence at Lake View was like the sharp sting of a serpent in her very heart.

"No," she said, rising to her feet, and speaking for the first time, "Harold Huntington shall never see my home, nor will I ever bring reproach on my relatives by asking him to go there."

Her firmness lasted her until she reached her own

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room, and then her courage gave way, and throwing herself on the bed, burst into passionate sobs.

All the happy weeks of her visit came back to her. Each tone of that one voice seemed to add another poisoned dart to her already acute agony; and then the thought of that very night, how near she had been hearing from his own lips the words of love her heart would have so rejoiced to listen to. When she thought of this her tears were dried, and she sat up to try and consider what an awful thing she was saved from. "Ah!" she told herself, "If he, to-night, had asked me to be his wife, and I had consented, as perhaps I should, not thinking of home at all, and he then had found out how poor we were, and had despised me"; and she remembered how he had said once to her, that he could forgive a person for anything but deceit; and then she thought she had acted deceitfully, representing herself as a rich relative of the successful McDonell's. She did not mean to do it, but as Geraldine hinted, folks supposed she was rich, and laid her poor clothes to a lack of taste on her part. The blood rushed to her face, as she thought of the faultless suits she had seen Mr. Huntington wear, and could imagine what he thought of her if, as she supposed, he considered her a young lady of means, who preferred those old-fashioned home-made dresses to the elegant costumes the other girls wore.

"Oh! it was terrible;" and Kathey spent the entire night crying over her fate. She did not now blame any of her uncle's family for the position they had

taken, and would gladly have told them so if she had had an opportunity. But when after her sleepless night she went down in the morning, only James was to be seen sitting in his place on the carriage-seat, so she was whirled off towards home ; bidding good-bye to all her past pleasure, and resolving that for the future she would try to be a mother to her younger sisters, though for herself love and happiness were at an end.



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CHAPTER III.

PRIDE AND POVERTY.



OW that we have learned a little of the past history of Kathey, we can better understand her thoughts and feelings as she unburdened her heart to Edith.

"Oh! Edith," she says, "you know I told you about a young man I met at uncle's when I was there, and how he wanted to bring me home, and I stole away for fear he would come; but I did not tell you all. I did not tell you that I loved him;" and here she hid her face in her hands and wept aloud. As soon as she became calm again, she told her sister all about her visit to his mother, and his lovely home, and his work as an artist, and she did not forget, girl-like, to mention his fine manly figure and dark expressive eyes, and his good Christian character. While Edith was astonished at this story, she had never heard before, she could not help wondering what all this that happened two years ago had to do with her sister's present trouble. But she waited patiently for her to proceed, knowing very well that now the revelation had begun, nothing would be kept back.

Kathey continued: After she had come home, she had bought papers that were published near his place, and had learned that he had taken his mother to a health resort in Germany, and later had read that his mother had died and was buried in that foreign country, it being the lady's wish to be buried where she died. The papers had given full details concerning the funeral; also telling how much the son had done for his invalid mother, and dwelling at length on his estimable character and wonderful talent as an artist; the next paper had mentioned that he had decided to go to Rome to study the best works of art, and would not return to his native land for a number of years. "And now," said Kathey, her tears gushing forth afresh, "I read in the paper I got the day we received that letter from uncle William, that Mr. Harold Huntington had returned from abroad, but would not be at his home until autumn, as he intended spending the summer with relatives in the vicinity of Summerville; and to think it should be at just the time that Geraldine and Roger are here, when he might see them and find out where we live, and the old house is a great deal worse looking now than it was then. Oh! dear, it does seem sometimes as if I cannot stand it."

Edith tried to console her sister as best she could, telling her that very likely these relations of his were some of the Hursts or Jacksons that lived so grandly three or four miles away from the village. But she could not help thinking, and so she told her sister, that if he were such a good Christian as every-

body called him, perhaps her being poor would not make so much difference as she had feared.

But Kathey would not have it that way at all; her main thought was to keep him from seeing how poor they were, and more especially that they should not be humiliated during their cousins' visit.

After many weeks of preparation the day arrived for the guests to make their appearance. Everything that could be done to make them comfortable had been done. As the time drew near Berthy's interest increased until it amounted to a sort of delighted frenzy. She flew hither and thither, collecting all of the presentable books and arranging them in conspicuous places, to give the college young man the impression that there were some members of the family at least that were studious. Of course her books did not please her very well, she would have been glad to have exchanged Rarey's Modern Art of Horse Taming for a volume of Shakespeare, or Mother Goose, and Anderson's Fairy Tales for a set of Dicken's works or Paradise Lost; but as that could not be done, she contented herself with turning the titles of the objectionable books toward the wall, and slipping a gay ribbon book-mark between the leaves of the Pilgrim's Progress, thinking that someone might have the idea that her sisters were making it a study, although she very well knew that neither of them had even as much as touched it except when Grace had disturbed the dust on its faded green cover with her wisp of turkey feathers.

And now everything was ready. Just as Berthy

thought of this and stopped to take a look around, her eyes fell on her own form in the mirror, and well she might pause, for a more dilapidated-looking little girl it would be hard to find. In her unselfish interest for the comfort of the visitors and the credit of the household, she had completely forgotten herself, a thing she was very apt to do. Often when dressed in her best if anything interested her or enlisted her sympathy, she never stopped to think of her clothes until her attention was called to the fact by one of her more careful sisters, who had little patience with her constant forgetfulness of keeping herself neat. But now she surveyed herself in the glass and remembered that she had on her best dress but had worn it all day, and had climbed over the fence to get some wild flags that she had wanted to make a bouquet to put in Geraldine's bedroom, and gone wading through the brook to find some stones to lay under the parlor table. Within an hour her cousins would be here and she not fit to see them. She was still gazing in the glass when she heard Edith's voice calling her and she turned slowly to obey the sound.

If she had forgotten herself there was one that had not forgotten her, for going into her sister's room what should she see but a befrilled and beribboned dress lying on the bed ready for her to put on.

Edith had worked early and late to make it out of one of her own, using some ribbon that Kathey had thrown away, but which dyed over looked very well.

Berthy's first thought was to throw her arms around her sister's neck and thank her for her thought-

fulness, but just at that moment Grace, who was standing by and probably thinking this a good time to teach her careless sister a lesson, said, in a remonstrating tone, "Now, do see if you cannot be careful of that dress, and not get it all soiled and torn the first time you wear it."

Berthy's fiery temper was ablaze in a moment. In spite of all her gratitude to Edith her resentment toward Grace was so great that she promptly told her she would not take any better care of this than she ever had of her dresses, and then relapsed into sullen silence, while Edith proceeded to put the dress on her and told her to hurry and get her hair combed before the company came.

All this spoiled the enjoyment the girl would naturally have felt with her new dress, "for now," she argued with herself, "if I am careful Grace will think it is because she told me to be, and I will not be ordered around by her; and if I am not careful Edith will think I do not care much for her present."

These were the hard places in Berthy's life, and although her Quaker friend would have told just where to go for strength to decide what to do, still in her rebellious little heart there was so much self-will that she preferred the pain she was suffering to the giving in, as she called it, when her better nature predominated. While making herself presentable with brush and comb she heard the tramp of horses' feet on the little bridge, and looking out saw at a short distance down the street her uncle's magnificent carriage and horses approaching. Of course Berthy

expected to see something very grand in the way of a turnout, but this was so far ahead of anything she had ever seen that her breath was completely taken away. She was very anxious to get a close view and yet, with her natural timidity, did not want to be seen. She ran out, and hiding herself in the heavy branches of an old lilac bush growing near the front gate had an opportunity to see all the splendor and not be seen herself.

She had barely time to reach her hiding place before the spirited team dashed up to the stepping stone, the door flew open and Roger's handsome face looked smilingly out.

He remembered well when he had visited here in his boyhood, and did not expect to find the place any different, but, with his natural love of fun, he could not let the opportunity pass without teasing his sister on the prospect of a summer outing.

"Oh!" he said, springing to the ground, "make haste to alight, we have arrived at Hill-Crest," and striking a theatrical attitude said, in a tragic voice, "Welcome, thrice welcome to Hill-Crest."

Berthy recognised the words she had used in her letter and knew in a moment that they were being made fun of, and all of her pleasure in their arrival was completely spoiled. She sat still for a long time after the carriage had gone and the guests had been welcomed into the house by her sisters. She did not want to see them now, she felt sure that when Roger saw her he would think of that letter again, and if he did not laugh at her, it would not be because he

did not feel like it; and she had taken such pains with the writing and spelling, and had copied it over to get it just right, and then to think it should be Roger that made fun of her, Roger, who she had expected would be so glad to see her, and from whom she hoped to learn so much. As usual she blamed herself for attempting to write a letter at all, or for not asking some one to look it over before it was mailed, but now it was too late, and she was reaping the reward of her folly. The tears were flowing fast when she heard Roger and Grace talking close to her. Grace was saying, "I cannot imagine where she is; when we heard the carriage, she was the first to run out to meet you."

Berthy knew they were talking about her, and it somewhat soothed her grief to know that perhaps Roger had asked for her. So when he and Grace returned to the house she crept out of her leafy bower (but not without tearing one of the bows of ribbon from her dress sleeve) and went quietly into the house. She thought she would go to her room and mend her dress and wash the tear-stains away, but, on reaching the side-door, she met Roger face to face. "Oh!" said he, "here is the little runaway now. Why were you not on hand to welcome me?" He did not say anything about "Hill-Crest," or the letter, and he seemed so glad to see her, and so full of life and spirits, that Berthy was soon laughing at his witty speeches, and so thoroughly enjoying his company, that all thoughts of her late vexation were forgotten.

Roger was a strong, active-looking young man, between nineteen and twenty. His blonde hair, cut closely behind, fell in curly rings on his broad, full forehead, and his eyes were such a dark blue, that with the mischief always in them, they appeared almost black. His face was entirely guiltless of beard, and but for the existence of certain weak lines around the mouth and chin, he might be called a fine specimen of young manhood.

Geraldine was what the world is pleased to call a society belle. Handsome she certainly was. A pure blonde, with a pink and white complexion; graceful in form, and with such soft beautiful hands, that they made you wonder what they were for. She did not seem to know herself, for she held them in a way that reminded one continually of their uselessness.

Strange to say she seemed to be very glad to be at Hill-Crest. She kissed all her cousins, and was so friendly with her uncle, that he declared "she had improved very much indeed," and he thought her "a very fine girl."

Her large trunks were filled with so many elegant dresses, that when they were taken out, there did not seem to be room enough for them in the house. Morning wrappers, with extensive trains; tea-gowns, that were a perfect bewilderment of lace and ribbon; heavy satin and velvet carriage dresses, all made the girls wonder when and where she was going to wear them. Then there was such an array of hats and bonnets and gloves and jewelry, that it seemed as though

a whole fancy store was about to be started in the small, shabby house. All this was a revelation and a supreme delight to Berthy, who never thought of contrasting it with their own scanty wardrobes, until her attention was called to the fact by some remarks from Grace. Grace delighted in fine clothes, and often thought if she could have a good supply of well-made dresses of rich material and fashionable cut it would be all she required in this world to make her perfectly happy. Yet that young lady was such an adept in arranging her hair, and selecting colors that harmonized with her bright complexion, and fitting her plump form with natty waists and delicate if inexpensive laces, that her friends always spoke of her as stylish, and she herself felt at times, that all the turning and pinching she had to practise, did not matter so long as the result was so gratifying. Then, too, there were no very grandly attired people in Summerville, and that in itself helped to make her more contented with the things in the way of personal adornment which Providence had seen fit to send her.

But this shower of beautiful finery that Miss Geraldine brought into the humble home completely upset the equilibrium of Grace and Berthy, who looked at it with feelings, if not of envy, at least of longing desire.

But Kathey and Edith felt it a personal insult, remembering the sharp things that Geraldine had said to Kathey on the occasion of her visit to Green Cliff; but, of course, this, as well as everything else in

connection with the present event, had to be borne with as good grace as possible.

Roger seemed to grasp the situation at once, and when his sister floated into the parlor on the evening of their arrival in a superb dinner dress of pearl-grey satin trimmed with point lace and a profusion of coral-pink ribbon, he took occasion to say when alone with her, "Dene, if I were you I would not sling on so much style, when you know the girls here cannot afford to have such nice dresses as you have; it is down right mean."

But this sage advice was lost on the fashionable and selfish Geraldine, who only gave her head a toss, and told him she would do as she liked, and when she wanted to hear his opinion on the subject she would ask for it. And though Roger exerted himself to seem very much at home, and kept carefully packed in his trunk his best suit of clothes, he did not succeed in convincing his sister that this display of grandeur was not only contemptible, but was also a breach of etiquette. As she was forever trying to impress on him as a matter of great importance the correct rules of society, it rather pleased the unpolished Roger to refer to her own short-comings in that line.

After the first day and evening at Hill-Crest, the family seemed to settle down to at least a fair appearance of comfort. Grace and Berthy took upon their young but experienced shoulders the entire care of the house work, leaving Kathe and Edith the much harder task of entertaining cousin Geraldine. As

for Roger, he kept close to the younger girls, as was evinced by the frequent peals of laughter heard from the kitchen. He proved to be far different from what Berthy had imagined. Instead of the lessons in philosophy and science that she had hoped to learn, she heard how he had beaten the entire class at a rowing match, displaying the prize with a great deal more pride than he manifested in speaking of his scholastic honors, although he had come off second to none in that line. But, like all young people who are educated for no particular purpose, he did not set a proper value on what would have been a source of pride to some aspiring young student who had been less favored.

The questions that Berthy had intended to ask were entirely forgotten in the novelty of trying to teach him to make a lemon pie or bake a sponge cake. He declared he wanted to know how to cook as he intended to take a trip to the Rocky Mountains; and as he knew he could not get along with the Indian way of doing things, he thought it best to possess a knowledge of cookery before he went.

This is only a specimen of the way Roger rattled on, telling the girls all sorts of unreasonable things with such a sober face and matter-of-fact air, that sometimes they were led to believe there was some truth in his statement, but when he saw there was any danger of his stories sounding too real he could always add a word or two that settled the question of their veracity at once. He had a wonderful gift of language, and could mimic anyone whom he ever

heard speak, from Edwin Booth in heavy tragedy to old Mrs. Randle calling her chickens.

Geraldine told Kathey that she was completely discouraged with Roger; he had not a particle of style about him, and that she did not dare tell him any secret, for as likely as not if she did he would tell on her, and it had made her so much trouble. Kathey wondered why she had any secrets and what they could be to cause her so much vexation.

But, although Roger seemed so boisterous all the girls liked him, for they were learning to know his true character and to find that he had a good heart, with tastes and feelings as fine as their own; and in so far as style was concerned he possessed what was much better, a self-respect that, although undeveloped and without dignity, was so much a part of his generous nature that he despised a mean thing in even his best friends, and with a decided voice and gesture to match would denounce it or turn it to ridicule on the spot. This was why Geraldine felt so discouraged with him. She had been brought up by her fashionable mother to believe that a girl's first duty was to marry well; and that if she used every means in her power to that end, even stooping to deceive and prevaricate, it was all a part of the correct plan to get a husband. Aiming at this mark, it was no wonder that her better nature was stifled and her views of life distorted. God pity the children of such mothers. They begin life at a disadvantage, with wrong ideas of what they owe to themselves and to their Creator, and living as they do in an atmosphere

of deception and false pride, they imbibe so much of its poison that it accompanies them through life and renders them suspicious of others, making a farce of all that is good and holy in this world, and completely shutting out of their hearts all true faith and trust in the divine realities of the world to come.

In the case of Roger, he had become so surfeited with outward show and the keeping up of appearances (as his mother was pleased to call her striving after popularity) that he sought to shake off all restraint by not acceding to any of their plans for his own advancement or his sister's future welfare, and, to use his own words, he had decided "to paddle his own canoe." His mother not quite understanding what he meant by that bit of silly song just left him out of her own and her daughter's confidence, never stopping to consider how much he needed her watchful care at this critical period in his life.





CHAPTER IV.

AT THE PARSONAGE.



HERE is a note for Edith," said Grace, coming into the parlor one morning about a week after the arrival of the cousins. "Where is she?"

"In her room," said Kathey, "making those hats for Mrs. Howell's little girls. I suppose the note is from her. They are going away to-morrow."

"Yes, it is from her, and she wants Edith to go over to the parsonage right away," answered Grace, going in search of her sister.

"Who is Mrs. Howell, and what has Edith got to do with the family at the parsonage?" asked Geraldine, appearing more interested than was usual with her.

"Oh!" said Kathey, "the minister does not receive a very big salary, and there is quite a large family to support, and, although we are not members of his church, we, or rather Edith, help Mrs. Howell with the children's sewing. They are going away to visit some friends, and the two girls had none but their winter hats to wear, and so Edith undertook to make

them each one with some material that Mrs. Parker gave her. Mrs. Parker is a member of that church and feels very deeply the disgrace of her pastor's family not being respectably dressed."

"Well," said Geraldine, "if I were Edith I would not worry myself about their business. It is enough for her to do the sewing for your family without sewing for any poor preacher's children." Just at that moment Edith came into the room dressed for a walk, with a large bandbox in her hand. She looked particularly lovely that morning in a pale heliotrope muslin dress, her hair combed back from her broad forehead, a large black chip hat shading her face and giving her an air of quiet modesty which seemed to suit so well with her errand, that Roger could not but enquire, in a sly undertone, as though not meant for Edith to hear, if Mrs. Howell's health was good, and intimated that he thought Edith would make a splendid wife for a minister.

This last remark caused the girls all to roar with laughter, as they thought of the corpulent old parson in connection with Edith.

The parsonage was some little distance from Hill-Crest beyond the main part of the village. It was set back from the street, shaded by large trees in a little garden, unpretentious but comfortable, and Edith always enjoyed going there.

This morning as she entered the gate, and was seen by the girls bringing the new hats, she was greeted by screams of delight so long and loud that the mother hurried to the front door to see what had

happened to her darlings to make them behave in so unladylike a manner. When she caught sight of her friend's smiling face she laughed, too, and taking her hand led her into the study instead of the parlor, where, to Edith's surprise, she found not only Mr. Howell but a young gentleman seated at the table writing. As soon as the ladies entered and the children had been sent to the nursery with the bandbox, Mr. Howell proceeded to shake hands with Edith and introduce Mr. Montgomery to her, and explain, "that this young gentleman, just from the Theological University, would occupy his pulpit during his absence.

It was all done so quickly that she had scarcely time to think what she was saying or to whom she was speaking until she found herself seated in a cosy chair, with Mrs. Howell telling her why she sent for her and why she wanted her to meet Mr. Montgomery before they went away. "You see," said that lady, "we have a sick family on our hands; they are members of our church who joined last winter, and are very poor people, and the worst of it is that there are none of our ladies that feel as if they cared to do anything for them, for they think them impostors, you know; but, of course, they have got to be looked after by some one, and as I am going away for a few weeks, I thought I would just ask you to drop in once in a while to see if there was anything they needed. They live near your place on the commons."

Edith having recovered her breath by this time, asked Mrs. Howell what the name of the family was,

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that she might try and locate them, as they were living so near her home. "Smith," was the answer, given in so confidential a tone that she laughed outright and was joined by the other occupants of the room.

But Edith knew very well that the family referred to was none other than the shiftless Josh Smith, his wife and little crippled son. They had been the bone of contention in her own family for the past five years. They had insisted upon coming to Hill-Crest for charity whenever they needed it, which was very often; and, although the girls gladly gave them all they could spare from their own scanty larder, yet Aunt Elizabeth was both indignant and scandalized whenever the shabby mother or the crutches of the cripple were heard at the back door. "We have nothing to give," she argued; "we haven't enough for ourselves, and it does not look well to see them hanging around, and besides the more you give them the less they will work. The father is a lazy, good-for-nothing scoundrel, or he would not let his family beg." Aunt Elizabeth had never seen the man she was speaking of, for when there was any begging to do he always let his wife or son do it, and as that was the only business they ever had at Hill-Crest, it did not seem necessary that he should become acquainted there himself. He was one of the sort who thought manual labor was the worst of all disgraces, and when from pure necessity he was driven to it, he tried to make the excuse that he was doing it either to accommodate his employer, or it was a piece of work that

no one but himself was able to do. Of course he was ridiculed and laughed at by everyone in the village, but it did not make a particle of difference with him. He had a fair education, and what little he did earn was expended on his own wardrobe. He always wore gloves and a necktie, and if what he said could be believed, he had been well brought up; but he had lost everything except his pride in his position as a gentleman of leisure and in his personal appearance.

It was rumored that he was not always honest, and so, when good Mr. Howell succeeded in getting him into the church fold, he felt he had done the community a very great favor, which up to this time they did not seem to fully appreciate.

Edith congratulated herself that Aunt Elizabeth was not at home, so she could promise freely that she would try to do something for the unfortunate family, especially when she learned that the mother and boy were both ill with pneumonia.

Mrs. Howell was so gratified when she received her promise, that she thanked her over and over again, and turning to Mr. Montgomery, said in one of her sweetest tones, "Now, Charley, I want you to stand by Miss McDonell, and help her all you can; that is the reason I brought her in here this morning, so you could get acquainted a little before I go away."

Mr. Montgomery answered, with a bow to Edith, "that he would be delighted to be of any assistance to her," and said "he thought the Smiths were fortunate in having two such staunch friends as Mrs.

Howell and herself." Edith, in thanking him, observed for the first time what a really fine-looking young man he was. He had a large full forehead and clear-cut features, a little pale from indoor work, but with a strong, decided look, that made one think that the Church had a minister who would fight for her rights as well as preach the blessed Gospel of Love. As Edith looked into his face, there came to her mind the words that Roger had said less than an hour ago. How provoking to think of them now. It caused her to blush and feel so uncomfortable, that she said she would have to go, as she was very busy with some work at home; and although Mrs. Howell urged her to stay for lunch, and she would have been delighted to accept the invitation, her self-possession was completely gone, and she knew she would be embarrassed all the time she spent in Mr. Montgomery's company, all owing to that foolish boy Roger. Pshaw! why did those stupid words keep in her mind all the way home, and why did they seem to fix themselves on the trees and sky, and everything that met her gaze? And what had Mr. Montgomery to do with her? Perhaps he was married or engaged already. "I am getting foolish, I guess," she said, as she turned into her own home.

Air castles were an unknown luxury in the McDonell family, where all was labor and plain reality. The many duties lay so thickly in their path that there was no time to step aside for pleasant places or congenial thoughts and fancies.

After Edith had bidden her friends at the Parsonage good-bye and gone home, Mrs. Howell called the children to show their papa what beautiful hats they had given them. Of course she knew that Mrs. Parker furnished her friend the lace and ribbon and flowers that they were made of, but she also knew that it was Edith who had suggested the need of it to the wealthy parishioner, and when the proud mamma had exhausted herself in praising the dainty head-gear and the self-sacrificing friendship of "that dear, lovely Edith," it was Mr. Howell's turn to ask why she did not say those words of commendation while the girl was there to hear them. At this remark his wife held up her hands in astonishment. "Why, my dear husband, have I not told you often enough that those girls do not like to have anyone refer to their work. You see they are the best, the truest girls I have ever known, but there is just one thing about them that I consider a grievous fault, "and that," said Mrs. Howell, lowering her voice almost to a whisper, "is their pride." "Well," said Mr. Montgomery, leaning back in his chair and fixing his keen black eyes on the face of Mr. Howell, "is that a fault?" He did not mean to ignore the pastor's wife, but that subject was one of so much importance to him, and he had studied it so much when alone, that now it had been mentioned in the presence of his old and experienced friend, he was anxious to get some light on this point, and therefore he put the question direct: "Is pride a fault, and how far can that pride be carried safely?"

Mr. Howell was a little surprised at his young friend's intense interest, but was always glad to discuss anything with him pertaining to Christian character.

"I do not quite understand you," he said, "pride is not always consistent with reason, but you speak of a certain kind of pride, please explain yourself."

"It is the pride of position, a sort of self-respect," said Mr. Montgomery, rising to his feet, for he felt he could make himself understood better when standing. "Those girls Mrs. Howell spoke of seem to think that their work shows too plainly that perhaps necessity has something to do in making them proficient, and I ask if it is right to nurture such pride, or to try with God's help to root it out of our natures?"

"Well," said the old man slowly, "I have thought a great deal on that subject myself, and have come to the conclusion that if there was more of that kind of pride, or independence, we will call it, the world would be the better. That is the stuff in a man that will make him economize rather than parade his poverty. It is what you see in a woman that makes her cover the short-comings of her husband, instead of making it a town scandal; and, although in some cases it is carried too far, as are a great many admirable traits of character, still, in itself, it is a good thing. Those McDonell girls," he continued, "as I understand it, are very poor. The father, honest and industrious though he is, cannot earn enough to keep them as they should be kept. They

are willing to do anything to help him along, but in a little place like Summerville there is no genteel work for young ladies to do, and so they just stay at home and economize, hiding their poverty ; and I am afraid they are becoming morbidly sensitive about it. Too bad, too bad," said the old man, speaking more to himself than to his companion.

Just at this time Mrs. Howell, who had left the room when the gentlemen became so much interested in their discussion, appeared again and announced lunch, and so the conversation ended. But Mr. Montgomery's mind had been stirred up and he could not forget the young lady whom he had seen and towards whom he felt himself drawn ; he told himself it was because her life in some respects was so much like his own. Pride and poverty, poverty and pride, it seemed to him, had been his portion all his life through. Poverty he had known in his youth, when he was working hard to get an education ; he succeeded in saving enough to take him into college, but when he could have gone on to the coveted goal his money was all gone, and then came his battle with pride. A young man immensely wealthy had made his acquaintance in the class room ; they had become warm friends, "chums," as they delighted to call each other. He knew in part his friend's difficulty, and offered him the money to take him through, but this the proud Charley would not accept, although he knew very well that he had wounded the feelings of his generous comrade by refusing the offer.

All these thoughts came back to him now, and

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excusing himself from the dining room, he put on his hat and wandered off down to the brook under the shade of the trees where he could think without being disturbed.

He had consecrated his life to the ministry, and he loved the church of his choice with a passionate devotion. It was not selfish indulgence he craved at the hands of fortune. But he could see so many places where, with unlimited means, he could do so much for his blessed Master, strong, persevering ambition seemed sometimes to overwhelm him with a desire for great wealth. He knew that this was not right, that the God he was trying to serve would give him all of this world's goods that he needed to make him a useful ambassador in His cause, and would withhold anything that would hinder the free course of the Holy Spirit's desired influence in his heart.

He knew these things, I say, and yet there were times like the present, when he had become interested in this womanly young girl, that he longed for many. "Why do I want it?" he asked himself, "surely I am not in love, I do not want a fortune to lay at *her* feet. And yet he could not but confess to himself that it would be very sweet to feel that she cared for him (just a little) and then with a decided gesture of his closed hand, he said almost aloud, "I will never ask her nor any other woman to share this galling poverty." He had reached the water's edge by this time. The broad smooth surface lay glistening in the afternoon sunshine; away to the left he could see a part of the busy mill, and hear a faint murmur of its noisy wheel,

and as he looked into the clear water at his feet, he could not but compare the pond to his own life. "Here I am kept in one place. But for the lack of money to finish the studies I have commenced, in a short time I could stand where my voice would be heard and appreciated; and then with increased influence, how much good I might be able to do. But now, with the exception of a call once in a while to fill a vacancy for a country parson, I am literally standing still, just like this sheet of water held here by that strong stone wall, that the mill wheel may have the benefit of its power."

He gazed long into the placid depths of the pond. The rustling of the leaves overhead, the musical ripple of the tiny wavelets that flowed along among the smooth little stones, seemed to breathe such an air of quiet contentment that even the restless perturbed spirit of the young man became soothed, and sinking down on the green bank he tried to bring his thoughts into subjection to the will of God. For, in spite of all his yearning after knowledge and his ambitious desires, he had a strong faith in the loving hand that was leading him onward and upward, and his constant prayer was to be kept patient and submissive.

He had learned that a close contact with nature was the best remedy for a discontented mind, and so he stood there communing with nature and with nature's God until the day was far spent.

When he arose to go, the sun had set, and the twilight was fast deepening into darkness. He had taken no note of time and was surprised to find it so

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late, especially as he remembered that Mr. Howell was going away very early in the morning, and would probably have a great many things to tell him concerning the charge he was leaving on his hands.

The iron foundry with its roaring furnaces had stopped work for the day, but the great archway that crossed the road leading from the brook path to the village was wide open. Two or three tired workmen with empty dinner pails were just leaving the building as Mr. Montgomery passed through on his way to the street, and one of them said to his companion, in a voice loud enough to reach the ear of the young man, "It is very easy for preachers to be telling us how we ought to live, and there that youngster has been sitting on the bank up yonder for the last half day, doing nothing at all, and just think of the sweat we have dropped in that time, eh, Jack!" The youngster referred to was pondering the words in his mind and wondering if the mechanic would like to change places with him, when he heard the sound of carriage wheels crossing the bridge. He stopped to let it pass, but the sleek light-stepping team was brought to a sudden halt, and a familiar voice called out, "Why, Charley Montgomery, what are you doing here?"

Peering into the carriage, for it was too dark to see plainly, he was met by the smiling face of his old college friend, Harold Huntington, who grasped his hand with such fervor that he was in danger of losing that useful member altogether. Mr. Huntington literally dragged his friend into the carriage; he seemed to think if he

relaxed his hold on his hand, he would disappear into thin air.

"I knew your figure and walk, old boy, as soon as I caught a glimpse of you. Where have you been keeping yourself? I have been home from Europe for the last three months, and could not find you anywhere. I had a mind to put a detective on your track.

The joy of the meeting was mutual. Charley Montgomery had no friend he so much loved and respected as this young man; they had roomed together from choice at the college, both stood equal in honors, and though their positions in life were different, they never seemed to feel it.

Harold was the idol of his mother, and with her fond indulgence and the courting he received from society would have been completely spoiled but for the purifying influence of this friend.

He tried to make Charley know that he was indebted to him so that he would receive something at his hands, but the pride of the less fortunate one was so great that Harold soon learned it would break up their friendship altogether if he pressed it too much, and so he contented himself by spending his money less lavishly on himself, that his friend might not be made to feel how much difference there was in their worldly advantages.

As soon as the first greeting was over, Charley told his companion how and where he was employed. He had a position in a university, where he taught all day and studied half the night, having the use of the

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library, one of the best in the country. Then he added, laughingly, "I get an invitation to fill a vacancy in some country pulpit, and so I have a chance to try my clerical powers on an unsuspecting congregation of some little church, that is what brings me here now." Harold heaved a sigh and Charley laughed again, saying, "Is that sigh for me or the people of the congregation?" Just then the carriage rolled into the street where the parsonage stood, and as it was getting late, he sprang out, promising Harold he would see him again, as not more than half of his time would be taken up by the duty he had to perform during the absence of the minister.

Harold, of course, had all the time there was, and he looked forward with much enjoyment to the pleasant companionship of his friend.

"Where are you going, Berthy?" said Roger, seeing her going out with her hat on.

"To see Mrs. Kenyon," was the answer. "I have not been there for more than a week, and I used to go every day almost before you came."

"What is the matter with my going, too?"

"There is nothing the matter with your going that I know of," said his cousin, laughing, "if you care to go."

At this Roger snatched his hat, lying on the floor near at hand, and walked out with his cousin. The fact was he was beginning to tire of the quiet life he was leading at Hill-Crest, and to wonder why he

came here at all. He had only been home from school a few weeks and was having a jolly time with the boys in his own neighborhood. Nothing to do but enjoy himself. They would take his little steam yacht and sail a few miles up the lake to a large town, where they would tie up and go ashore and attend the theatre; or if they went in the morning, in time to see a horse race, all the better. There were no ropes on him, he said, and if they stayed three days instead of one, it did not make any difference, there were no questions asked at home. But all at once his father had taken a notion that he must go with his sister to visit relations, and he did not understand it. Of course he had gotten along pretty well so far, but he was beginning to be restless, and now as he walked along down the green lane at Berthy's side, he said to her in a somewhat absent-minded way, "Don't you get sick of staying in this sleepy little town all the while? There is nothing going on to interest a fellow. No one does anything but work, so far as I can see."

Berthy looked him squarely in the face and answered promptly, "That is just what I think, and Aunt Elizabeth has scolded me often for saying it. I get tired of doing the same things over and over again every day. It seems as if we lived in a little corner of the world, and do not know anything that is going on outside of our home. I feel sometimes tempted to run away; but when I feel like that I go and have a nice long talk with Mrs. Kenyon, and she tells me so sweetly that the outside world is full of

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wickedness, and that I must be contented where God has placed me, that I feel all right again and go on with my work."

"I hope she will not preach me any sermons on contentment," said Roger, as Berthy rang the door bell, looking as if he had a mind to run, but his cousin assured him that her friend was a lovely old woman, and would not say anything to hurt his feelings. It was a delightful summer evening, and the air was filled with the perfume of the roses growing by the porch. Although Berthy went to the front door, she knew very well that she would be apt to find Mrs. Kenyon on the back verandah, where it was always pleasant with the comfortable easy chairs and soft matting under foot, but she had a stranger with her to-night, and so she thought it best to go to the hall door. As the servant girl opened the door, the sound of laughter came to them from the sitting room.

"I wonder who is here," thought Berthy, as she was ushered into the parlor to await the coming of her hostess.

"I am glad to see thee, also to greet thy friend," said the Quakeress, as she entered the room and was introduced to Roger.

"I have a pleasant surprise for thee, Berthy," and turning to the little girlish figure at her side, said, with a gleam of lovelight in her eyes, "This is my daughter Rachel, just come home to-day from school, after being gone more than a year."

The young girls greeted each other as old friends might have done. Mrs. Kenyon had mentioned

Berthy many times in her letters, and talked of Rachel so much to Berthy that they were prepared to become fast friends as soon as they met. But when the old lady would have introduced Mr. McDonell to her daughter, it was her turn to be surprised, for, as that young man took the hand of the pretty Rachel, he assured her mother that they had had the pleasure of meeting before.

And then followed an explanation of how Roger had rescued her from a dog that had almost frightened her to death; and another time he had secured for her some wild flowers that she wanted very much, and nearly lost his balance reaching over a cliff to get them. The school that Rachel Kenyon attended and Roger's college were only a short distance apart, and the young people often met at the homes of friends, or at picnics, and so had become very well acquainted. The evening passed away pleasantly. Rachel played and sang delightful little songs, and Roger joined in with his clear tenor, and then Mrs. Kenyon called for some hymns and, of course, they could all sing them. Even Berthy found herself singing heartily Old Coronation and Bethany, with Roger holding the book for her and Rachel playing the accompaniment. It was all like a glimpse of heaven, and when the hour for departing came she was afraid she would awake and find it a dream.

There were great plans made for the coming weeks, in which the young people would be much together, and it appeared now as if Roger would not find the time hanging heavily on his hands, if he took the girls to all the places he promised,

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"I must spend the most of my time at home as mamma and I have been parted so long," said Rachel, putting her arm lovingly around her mother's neck. "We will have a great deal of visiting to do in the time to come, but then I do not intend to go away again ever, do I?" said the girl, caressing the grey head that leaned against her shoulder. They were all standing but Mrs. Kenyon, who sat in an easy chair, with her daughter near her. There was a sharp pain in Berthy's heart, as she witnessed this evidence of love between mother and daughter; and the look of sadness was not lost on her Quaker friend, for she put out her hand and drew Berthy to her, as she answered her daughter, "No, we will not be parted again very soon I hope, but we must have Berthy with us, for she has been like my own child while thee has been away."

These words were very sweet to the motherless girl, and she tried to thank her friend, but could not say what was in her mind, and so she pressed the kind hand that held hers, and was silent.

Roger was delighted at having met again with Rachel Kenyon. His boyish heart had gone out to her at their first meeting—how well he remembered it. Being off on a hunting tour one day with one or two of his friends, they had become separated. The large fox-hound belonging to one of the professors, bounded on ahead. The dog had never seen a fox in his life, and did not know that the boys brought him along just as they did their guns, to match their shooting jackets and high top-boots. He thought

when he saw a little girl run from him and climb hastily up into the branches of a tree, that the right thing for him to do was to bark at her with all his might, until some one came to give him further advice or assistance; and accordingly when Roger heard him making such a noise and went to see what it was about, he found the pretty brown eyes of the little Quaker lassie streaming with tears, and her white hands clutching the limb of an old tree that threatened every moment to break and let her down into the jaws of what seemed to her the most savage canine she had ever seen. As soon as the dog heard Roger's voice he ran to him, wagging his tail, and jumped up about him, as much as to say, "There is your game, I kept it until you came." Roger proceeded to help the young lady out of her uncomfortable position, and sympathising with her at being so badly frightened, went with her to a pool of water, and bathed her poor, bleeding hands, and tore his own linen handkerchief in strips to bandage them with, and when he was walking out into the roadway, he realised that he had by his side one of the daintiest little ladies he had ever seen. Her hair was a golden brown, and her complexion clear; her cheeks and lips always rosy, were now a vivid scarlet from her recent excitement. She looked to him the very pink of perfection.

And was it any wonder that when he met her again, and she recognised him with a little girlish blush, that he should be indeed her devoted knight, risking his very life for the little cluster of wild

flowers we have already mentioned, or that simple-hearted Ray should look upon him as the bravest and handsomest youth she had ever met. There was no thought in their innocent young hearts of anything but the present enjoyment in each other's society.

This all happened a year ago, but now, as they met again, there was a little conscious embarrassment that they had not felt in each other's company before.

It seemed a new life was opening for Berthy.

Mrs. Kenyon had intimated that her daughter could consider her a friend, and she was so lovely and sweet. There was only one drawback to her complete felicity, and that was her lack of the pretty dresses she already noticed that Rachel wore, which contrasted with her own shabby attire. There were other eyes that had noticed the same thing, for as she and Roger were walking home, he said, in his abrupt way, "Say, cousin, I have never given you a present since I have been here, have I? Now, I want to give you one, and I don't know what you would like best, so here is some money and you can get anything you want," and before Berthy could refuse or accept, he thrust into her hand a bank note. "There, take it for a present you know, yours truly, Roger McDonell," he added with that mock gravity that amused her so much. And so she put the crisp bill into her pocket, telling him she had not expected a present, but thinking all the time how many things she could get for a dollar.

She hurried into her room on reaching the house,

and found Grace already in bed ; then she tried to tell her all that had happened that evening, but as the *present* came last in her recital she could not make a connected story of it. Snatching the money out of her pocket, cried, "There, see what Roger gave me to buy a present with," and unfolding it, disclosed to her sister's gaze, not a one but a ten dollar bill. Her surprise was even greater than Grace's, although that young lady was nearly paralyzed. She sat up straight in bed, and they looked at each other in open-eyed wonder for at least two minutes before either could speak, and then Grace, who had recovered her breath first, assured her sister that it was all a mistake, he would never have given her so much ; he probably had taken from his pocket the wrong bill.

They talked far into the night on this and kindred subjects. They were good company for each other, for while Grace was always contented with herself and surroundings she, in an indirect way, helped to make the uneasy Berthy see that she might be worse off than she was, and if the thought did not bring content, it at least produced a sort of thankfulness that served to make her less inclined to find fault with her hum-drum life at Hill-Crest.

When the girls told Roger in the morning of the mistake he had made, he only laughed at them, and insisted upon Berthy's keeping the money ; but just as they were talking Kathey chanced to pass, and hearing them mention the amount she scolded him soundly for giving away his money, and insisted

so strongly on his taking it back, that he was compelled to do so; although later in the day he gave it again to Berthy, telling her to keep it for him, as he would spend it foolishly if he had it.

He thought in his heart that she would perhaps buy herself something with the money. He did not know how strong the girl was to resist temptation, having all her life been schooled by necessity, nor did he think that the time would come when he would need this money more than Berthy had ever needed it. But we will not anticipate.

After Harold's first meeting with his friend he did not let a day pass without seeing him. He had come to Summerville for a particular reason, had put up at the best hotel in the place, and spent his time in walking or driving around the country. The society columns in the paper said he was visiting relatives, and he had not cared to contradict the statement; the fact was, that since his return from Europe there had settled on him an uneasiness which his friends attributed to the death of his mother, and he felt that his empty, lonely home had something to do with it. But his mind, continually turning toward this little village, told him more plainly that there was some one there that he very much desired to see, and a mystery that he felt was worth clearing up; but now he was on the ground, he seemed as far as ever from finding out the whereabouts of the one he sought, or the reason of the sudden disappearance of his truant lady love.

He had asked Geraldine on the morning of Kathey's departure what it meant, but that diplomatic young lady's answer had never seemed quite satisfactory, and after his pride and indignation had time to cool, he thought long and earnestly on the subject; then he resolved to go to Summerville and stay there until he should arrive at the correct solution of what was to him a very trying problem. He had not lacked attention from charming girls, but there was ever before his mind the bright vivacious Kathey, the saucy curl of the proud lip, and the mischievous sparkle of the blue eyes, with the ready sympathy and reserved modesty that made her, in his opinion, a very queen among women. Then he knew she was one that must be wooed. He did not expect any advances from her, and although he was almost angry at the manner in which she had slipped away from him when she must have known he was on the eve of a declaration, still he was beginning to think there was a mystery about it, and he had set himself to work to find it out.

"There is no use in my asking Charley anything about a girl," he said to himself one morning as he was going to call on his friend, "for it is not likely he has seen one since he came here, he never did care for the society of the fair sex. What a strange fellow he is. I wonder if it is because he is so much interested in religion. Ah! hang it, I am going to give him a piece of my mind when I get a chance. Of course, it is all right to belong to a church; I am a church member myself, but this sacrificing

everything that is pleasant in——. Hello! old fellow, I was just going to your place, and getting my little piece all ready to speak, when I saw you," said Harold as he turned a corner and met his friend face to face. "Where are you going so early?"

"I am going to see a sick woman and her boy."

"There you go again, that is just what I was thinking of as I came along. What is the use of your burying yourself alive in this everlasting strife to preach the Gospel?" said his friend in a grieved, querulous tone of voice, that was very unusual with him. "Stop," he said, as Charley would have answered. "I am going to have my say. There are fifty places you can fill just as well as not, and I have influence enough to get you any one of them, if you would give up this wild-goose chase after notoriety in the pulpit. Of course, religion is all right," he added, as he noticed the reproving expression on the young minister's face; "but you can serve God and be something besides a pale, bloodless expounder of Bible history. What a lawyer you would make, with your fine stage presence, good voice, and masterly command of language. You ought to be pleading at the bar this minute for the life of some poor, condemned wretch." So much in earnest had he become, and so certain that this last argument would turn his friend's mind, that he grasped him by the arm and looked him full in the face, as if demanding an immediate surrender.

"Oh!" said Charley, in a voice as calm as his face was serene, "I am willing to use all the power I have

in pleading the cause of sinners at a higher tribunal than those of this earth."

Harold did not answer, there was nothing for him to say. He was not convinced, but he had so exhausted himself in his own vehement language that he needed time to rest.

Charley continued: "If there were more pleading at the bar of God there would be less occasion for it in the unjust courts of men. But come, do not let us stand here, people will think we are quarrelling. I promised Mrs. Howell that I would look after this poor family while she was gone. There is a Miss McDonell, a friend of hers, who is taking care of them, I believe, and I half expected she would send for me before this time, but as she has not I thought I would go there this morning. Mr. Howell will be home to-morrow, and his wife will think I have not kept my promise to her." When Harold heard the name of McDonell it aroused his interest at once, and when Charley asked him if he cared to go with him he very promptly consented, much to the surprise and amusement of his companion.

The little house stood alone on the commons, without trees or fence. The broken windows and sagging doors told of extreme poverty and destitution. The two young men walked quietly up to the door, which was opened to Mr. Montgomery's knock by a tall, graceful girl in a blue gingham dress and white apron, whom he introduced to Mr. Huntington as Miss McDonell.

"How are the sick ones to-day?" asked Charley, in a hushed tone of voice.

"The little boy died in the night," was the startling answer, "and the doctor says that Mrs. Smith cannot live long. I am so glad you came," continued Edith. Mrs. Adams and myself are all alone, and do not know what to do. We have been here all night. Mrs. Smith will not let me leave her a minute."

Harold looked around. It was a strange experience for him, he had often given money to help the poor, but had always been careful not to come in contact with them. Not so with his friend, who seemed to be perfectly at ease, and assuring the pale, agitated girl that the church people would undoubtedly come to the rescue, he turned to the bed whereon lay the emaciated form of the dying woman.

"You are very sick, my dear sister," he said, taking her thin hand in his, and speaking in a voice as tender as a woman's. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Who are you?" she asked, looking at him in a sort of dazed wonder.

"I am the preacher who is taking Mr. Howell's place while he is away."

"Oh! When is Mr. Howell coming home? I wish he was here now."

"He will be home to-morrow."

"To-morrow! I shall not be here, I shall be dead by that time." She lay for a few moments with closed eyes, and when she spoke again her voice sounded a trifle weaker than before.

"I would like to have Mr. Howell pray for me once more before I go"

"Shall I pray for you?" said Mr. Montgomery, in a gentle, soothing tone.

"Yes, yes; but Mr. Howell knew I was a poor lost sinner, and his prayers always did me so much good, but may be God will hear you," and she closed her eyes again and folded her hands on her breast.

Without any seeming preparation Charley knelt by the poor, shabby bedside and, lifting his face heavenward, poured out his soul in prayer for this woman who had just acknowledged herself "a poor lost sinner." He thanked God for his mercy in taking the little child first, that he might be waiting with his redeemed, blood-bought spirit, freed from the dwarfed-crippled body—waiting to receive the careworn, patient mother to scenes of endless bliss; and then he asked for a blessing on the lonely father, and prayed that great good might come to him through what seemed a dark cloud of affliction. Nor did he forget the self-sacrificing young girl who had labored so patiently for these, Christ's little ones.

When he had finished, the pale face of the dying woman was lit up with an almost angelic smile. "I am not afraid to die now; all seems bright and clear, thank God."

Edith was weeping softly, and Mrs. Adams, who was sitting by the dead boy, was sobbing aloud. Harold stood motionless, his eyes riveted upon the floor, his arms folded on his breast. He seemed lost in thought, but when Mr. Montgomery arose to go he seemed to recover himself, and, turning to Edith, said, "I will send the undertaker to do all that is necessary

here." At the same time placing in her hand a twenty dollar gold piece, he said, "Buy anything you need to make the woman comfortable while she lives."

When they had reached the street Charley was the first to speak. "I tell you, Harold, it must be an immense amount of satisfaction to be able to do what you did to-day."

"Don't mention it, Charley; the undertaker's bill and that bit of gold were nothing to what you left in that house. To see that soul made fit for heaven while you were there on your knees, showed me that I never understood what true religion meant before. Forgive me for what I said to you this morning. What is all the wealth of this world to a man who can pray such a prayer as you uttered there at that bedside; it seemed as if you just grasped the arm of the Almighty."

As he spoke he looked into the young minister's face, and was surprised to see such a look of pain and sadness when he expected to see him not proud, perhaps, but at least gratified by his words of appreciation.

"Harold," and his voice was tremulous with emotion, "I know you say only what is in your heart, and I also know that you expect me to be pleased with your words of approval, and there is not a person on this earth whose good opinion I value more than I do yours; and further, if you had said half as much concerning a sermon or an article I had preached or written, I should be profuse with my thanks, but

when anyone mentions my prayer it is different. There is a feeling right here that I cannot describe (and he placed his hand on his heart), as if you had been eaves-dropping and were taunting me with what you had heard. Don't think I am ungrateful, old friend ; it is only a notion, perhaps no one feels as I do, but you know what a hard life I have had, and I know, if you don't, how this looking to God in prayer have been all I have had sometimes to keep me from suicide, and, though I would be glad to have you derive the same comfort from it that I have, I could not wish my worst enemy to go down the depths I did in order to find that great and glorious relief.

"Forgive me if I have hurt your feelings, but I feel very strongly on this subject, and sometimes go so far as to think I ought to give up the practice of audible prayer altogether."

"No, no," said Harold ; "don't think of it for a moment. It is the voice of the tempter." It sounded queer to hear the same young man saying this who, a few minutes before, had tried to persuade his friend to give up his calling, but he was thoroughly in earnest, and neither of them noticed the change that had so quickly taken place. "I have never heard you preach," he added, "but if you have the same power in that——" he stopped a little confused. "Well, Charley, you have found your vocation, and I will be the last of your friends to discourage you from going on, even if this blind, blundering world does not accord to you the meed of praise that you deserve."

They had now reached the parsonage, Charley had

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to see about the arrangements for Willie Smith's funeral, and Harold walked on to the undertaker's office to tell him to take charge of the little boy's remains, and send him the bill.

He met the doctor in the door way, and stopped and asked him how long it would be before Mrs. Smith would require a like service. The little M. D. was so impressed with the fine appearance of Mr. Huntington, that he promised him he would call at the Smith's home and give her case his whole attention, from this time on; but when he hurried into the dilapidated house a few hours later, his services were not required, for with the same sweet smile on her face she had worn since morning, her soul had gone up to join the glorified spirit of her baby, at the feet of their Heavenly Father.

The mother and little boy were buried in one coffin. Mr. Howell came home in time to preach the sermon to an overflowing church. All of the members turned out and expressed their satisfaction that Mrs. Smith, poor soul, had been saved at the recent revival.

Hearse and carriages, and plumes and flowers were not wanting; Mr. Huntington paid for everything without a murmur at the price, even giving the doctor a generous fee.

When it was all over, and he saw the poor, weak, miserable Joshua standing by the newly-made grave, he turned to Charley and said, "What can we do for that poor fellow? He is not capable of looking after himself."

"No," said Charley, and the people hereabouts have no pity for him ; come, let us see what he needs most, I know you are just pining to do another generous act."

When Joshua was interviewed he whimpered something about having a brother in Colorado, and he would go there if he had the money, whereupon Harold furnished what was needed, and bidding him God speed, had the satisfaction the next day of seeing him start for the golden west.

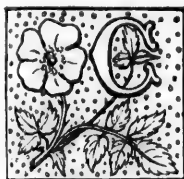


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CHAPTER V.

THE FIRE.



ERALDINE, do you know the young man who paid the funeral expenses for the Smith's is none other than Harold Huntington," said Roger, the morning following the events recorded in the last chapter. "I saw him last night on the street and told him you were here, and invited him to call, and he is coming to-night. He had that young preacher with him. Phew! But he is a fine-looking fellow, Harold cannot hold a candle to him. I invited him, too, but he said he was going away this morning.

The girls heard all this in silence. Roger seemed so perfectly at home in their house that it did not occur to him that he had no right to invite anyone he chose to come there; but when no one spoke he looked from one to the other in surprise, and said, "he seemed awfully glad to come, and I don't know as I should have invited him, if he had not given me such broad hints, and then he urged Mr. Montgomery to come, too, but he declared he would have to go back to his work, saying, duty before pleasure had always

been his motto, and he thought it always would be, but he told me to remember him to Miss McDonell.'

"I suppose that means Kathey, as she is the eldest," said Berthy. But just then seeing the blushing face of Edith, every eye was turned upon her, so much to the discomfort of that young lady that she made her exit, followed by Kathey, whose embarrassment, though just as great, was unnoticed by anyone but Geraldine, and she thought best to make no reference to it.

When the sisters were alone in their room they stood for a few moments in confused silence. There had been so much to do for the last few days that they had scarcely time to speak together. Edith did not think she dared to mention the young minister's name, for what was he to her?

But she knew Kathey's heart secret. She knew how that brave girl had refused to go anywhere this summer for fear she would chance to see the one who was dearer to her than life.

Edith had felt all the time that her sister's fears were unfounded, and now that she had seen and spoken with him, had looked into his face, and had learned by his generosity how truly noble he was, she was glad that there was an opportunity for them to meet again. She did not wonder that her sister loved him; perhaps she too might have admired him more had she seen him alone, but she told herself that with Mr. Montgomery present it was not possible anyone could think much of Mr. Huntington, although he was such a splendid type of manly beauty.

Kathey was the first to speak after they had made sure they were alone.

"Edith," she said, "Mr. Huntington must not come here to-night."

"Oh! Kathey," said her sister, impatiently, "You are carrying your pride too far. I met Mr. Huntington—" she paused, not wanting to tell where, "but," she continued, "I believe he loves you yet, for he seemed so delighted when he was introduced to me, and I know it was not on my account."

To say that Kathey was surprised would be only to give a faint idea of the emotion her sisters' words had caused.

"Where did you see him, pray?"

Then followed in detail all that had passed at the parsonage and at the house of death.

Roger's words that morning were the first that Kathey had heard of Harold's whereabouts, and to think that her sister and he should become acquainted under such circumstances was, indeed, remarkable. But although Edith told all this to try to persuade her sister to let him come to their home it was of no use, for she turned to the table and hastily wrote a note, saying that it would not be convenient to have him call, as they had other engagements. She said, as she handed it to Edith to post, "I should not care so much if it was not for Geraldine, who is forever talking about him, and saying how proud he is, and parading our poverty. I do not believe she would stay here to-night if he came, she would be so mortified."

If Kathey had heard what Geraldine was saying to Roger about that time she would have changed her mind.

As soon as the girls had left the room Geraldine turned to her brother and said, "Oh! Roger, I am so glad you invited Mr. Huntington here to-night. You know that papa does so want me to encourage him. He is very rich and could help papa so much, and if he does not get help soon he will have to close the mill, and that means ruin to us; but if Harold and I could make a match," she added, laughingly, without the least sign of shame at so cold-blooded a transaction, "it would be all right and save poor papa from the disgrace of breaking down."

"So that is what you came here for this summer, is it? Well, if I had known that I would not have come with you. I do hate match-making, and you and father and mother are always at it. You do not love Harold at all, and yet you would marry him just for his money—it is contemptible."

"Roger McDonell, you are just as hateful as you can be. I cannot tell you anything but you go off in one of your goody, goody spells. A person would think you were a saint to hear you talk. I will never tell you anything again. But," said his sister, changing her voice to a coaxing tone, "you will not tell the girls what I said; promise me, Roger, you will not."

But Roger would not promise. Although he did not intend to tell, he liked to make his sister think he would, which worried her so much, that when

Kathey next looked into the room Geraldine was crying, and of course her cousin thought it was because of the expected visit that evening, and it helped to strengthen her determination that the offending party should not come, although her own heart was breaking for a sight of the beloved face.

Edith went to the Post-office and saw, just as she was turning the corner, the old stage starting for the depot. Mr. Montgomery had already taken his seat, Mr. Huntington was bidding him good-bye, and both raised their hats to her, and in another moment she was in the Post-office. A sad, lonely feeling came over her as she heard the rumbling old stage coach rattle off up the road. it seemed as if she was angry with some one, but she did not know with whom it could be.

Just then Mr. Huntington strolled leisurely in through the broad door-way, and going up to her, offered her his hand in the most cordial manner possible. He never looked to better advantage than he did this morning, in his light summer suit and soft brown felt hat and gloves to match. He strongly impressed Edith as a gentleman of wealth and refinement, but there was something so unaffected and natural about him that she could not imagine him looking with critical eyes on those less favored than himself, and when he spoke of parting with his friend, and she saw a suspicious moisture in his big, honest eyes, it settled the fate of Kathey's note. At once she crushed it back into her pocket, and asking

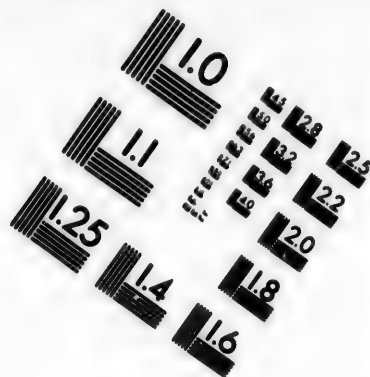
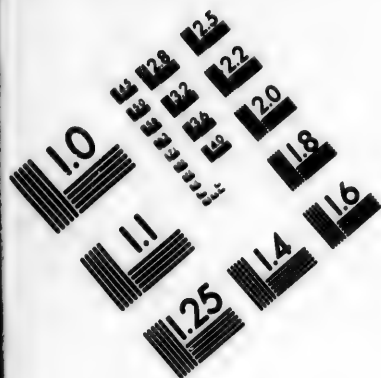
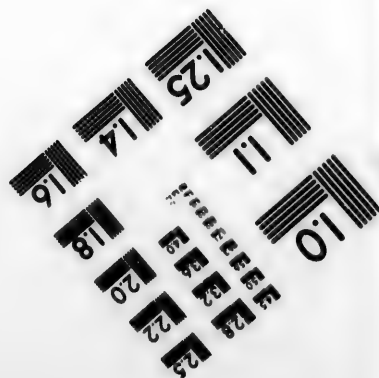
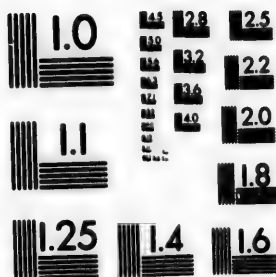


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for some postage stamps, bade the young gentleman good-bye, and going straight home gave to the kitchen fire what Kathey had intended should separate her forever from the man she loved.

The McDonells always dined at twelve o'clock, which was the hour that the father could best be at home, and so the girls planned to have something choice for that meal. To-day it was a game dinner that was set before the family. Roger had shot some wild fowl the day before, and he and Berthy had dressed them. Berthy delighted in cooking, which was the only part of house work she cared to do. Perhaps she did not know why she preferred it to any other, but the reader can easily see that with the craving for love that was part of her nature, it was very plain that any triumph in the culinary art would bring forth words of praise that more than repaid her for doing her best in that line.

Just as the household had all assembled to discuss the mid-day meal there was a sharp knock at the front door, and when it was answered it brought the intelligence that there was a telegram for Roger. It ran thus: "Come home. A fire last night. Mill burned. Father not expected to live."

When Geraldine heard it she went into violent hysterics.

Roger paced the floor not knowing what to do. But Mr. McDonell, though shocked for a moment, quickly rallied, knowing that prompt action was necessary. He said in a firm voice, "We must go immediately, it is too far to drive. We will take the

afternoon train, and by wiring ahead, will be able to be at your place to-night. I do not understand how William's life could be endangered by the burning of the mills, but we shall see, as I intend to go with you and Geraldine. Come, girls, get her clothes packed up, there is no time to lose."

And in less than an hour from the time the news came, Mr. McDonell, Roger and Geraldine were on their way to witness they knew not what. When Geraldine was ready to go, although in such apparent trouble, she said apart to Kathey, "I wonder if Mr. Huntington will care to come now that I am going away."

"No," said Kathey, "he will not come, I wrote him not to."

And so Geraldine was satisfied on that score.

As the anxious party neared the scene of the late conflagration everyone they saw was talking of it, and the remarks caused Robert McDonell so much anxiety that he could not wait until he arrived at his journey's end without making inquiries.

While waiting at the depot for the carriage, he saw a man who had been at the place, and upon asking him the particulars in regard to the cause of the calamity, this was the story he heard: "You see that woolen mill was supposed to be a big paying thing. William McDonell was one of those close-mouthed fellows, no one ever knew his business, and then his family putting on so many airs, and all that, made the workmen think he was making a little too much out of their labor; it don't do to go on in that style, you

know. Well, it was when the son came home from college the trouble commenced; he had to have a steam yacht fitted up for him, and he lived pretty fast. One day as the men were resting at noon the book-keeper was asking young Roger what he intended to do now he had finished his education.

"Oh!" said he, "I will not have to do anything. I guess the old man can make enough out of them fellows to keep me without work." He did not know that they heard him, and I don't think he meant it, for he is as good a boy as you will find in a day's travel. But, you see, the men were mad in a moment, and one of them particularly, who had known Bill McDonell when he was a poor workmen like himself, had been threatening and trying to set up the men to go out on a strike, and when he heard what Roger said he muttered something between his teeth about pride taking a fall and some one else working for their bread. The men all felt there was something going to happen, and I guess that McDonell got a hint of it, for he sent his son away about two weeks ago, and thought that would probably put an end to the trouble; and may be it would, but yesterday he cut the men's wages, and some of them could hardly live on what they got any way. Well the upshot of the matter was, that last night the whole thing was fired, set in two or three places.

"When McDonell saw the flames he was like a maniac, he rushed from the house (you know it is about a quarter of a mile from the mills) with scarcely any clothes on, made for the office, and before anyone

could hold him back, he was inside of the burning building, and when he was carried out by the firemen half dead, he wanted to go back as soon as he got his breath, telling the men if he did not save the papers in the office, he was a ruined man. People are beginning to find out he was not so prosperous as he made believe.

"He was as proud as Lucifer, and foolish too, not to let his men know more of his circumstances, and they would have had more sympathy for him, and this thing perhaps would never have happened."

It was with a heavy heart that Robert McDonell went on to his brother's home. When he got there, the first thing that met his eyes was a heavy knot of crape on the door. It was all over.

The doctor said it was the intense excitement, as much as his injuries by the fire, that had caused his death.

Nothing was saved. After the funeral, the house and furniture, horses and carriages, were sold at public auction, and it did not pay half the demands of the creditors. Geraldine and her mother clung together in helpless despair. Some of their friends offered them a temporary home, which they gladly accepted; and Roger went with a friend of his to a distant town to see if he could find any work, as he realized for the first time that he would have to do something to support himself.

Hill-Crest seemed very quiet after the departure of the guests. Grace and Berthy felt lonely when they thought of the gay fun-loving Roger, but no one mourned the loss of Geraldine.

As the afternoon began to wear away, Edith became uneasy. She did not feel that she had done wrong in burning the letter entrusted to her care, and yet her honest nature despised deceit of any kind. Down in her heart she felt that if Kathey could see Mr. Huntington, as she had seen him, she would not accuse him of any false pride, for Edith thought that pride of wealth and surroundings was false; she remembered, too, how Mr. Montgomery had told her of the friendship that existed between himself and Harold, and had dwelt on the difference in their positions, and had said in his enthusiastic convincing way, that his friend was true-hearted and generous to a fault. It was on the morning of the funeral at the Smith's that they had this talk. Edith had reason, of which Mr. Montgomery knew nothing, to be glad to hear these words of praise for Harold, and when she showed so much interest in what he was saying he felt, perhaps for the first time in his life, a little pang of jealousy; but he quickly put it aside and continued the conversation.

As they were standing by the side of the coffin, admiring the beautiful white lilies that lay on the bosom of the unconscious sleepers Charley said, "How like Harold those flowers look; his seems a soul that prosperity cannot spoil. He has been surrounded all his life with the beauties of nature and art. And all he seems to think of is how he can make others happy by sharing his luxuries with them. There is nothing that makes *me* lose confidence in myself so much as

to think that God has got to keep me poor that I may be made useful."

Edith had pondered long on these words, and she had tried to bring herself to tell her sister all the things he had said concerning Harold, but she could not without disclosing her own feelings regarding this young man; and there seemed something so sacred in her thoughts of him that she could not tell her sister anything he had said to her, but treasured them in her heart alone. While she was thinking of these things, and contemplating the advisability of confessing to her sister how she had burned her letter, there came a sharp knock at the door, and in a moment Harold was standing in the parlor, holding the hand of the surprised, but evidently pleased Kathey. Edith saw them from her room, and took plenty of time to put away some work she had been engaged upon, and laid aside her apron and arranged her hair a little; so that at least ten minutes had elapsed before she made her appearance, and then she feigned surprise at finding company.

Was she a hypocrite? Well, if so, she was at least a loving one; and it was a long time after before she was permitted to know how much her interest in this love affair interfered with her own.

Kathey was saying something about it being a disappointment for him not to find Geraldine there, when Edith entered, but he assured the young ladies that he had not come expressly to see Miss Geraldine; and then the subject of the fire was talked of a little, but the trio were too happy just at present to dwell

on so gloomy a subject, and the conversation turned very naturally to more congenial topics.

Harold spoke of his friend, and if he and Kathey had been less absorbed in their own affairs they would have noticed how eagerly Edith listened to everything relating to Mr. Montgomery's life past and present, and his outlook for the future, which Harold seemed to think was a little dubious.

"He is one of the men of whom this world is not worthy," he said. "When I look at him and see what a sacrifice he is making for the good of others, just simply that he may save souls and advance the cause of the Gospel, I am lost in wonder. There is something in him that ordinary Christians have not. When he was ten years old his father and mother both died. He was adopted by a farmer; he worked in the fields, drove cows and cut wood for the next five years, studying all the time, with the chance of only four months schooling in the winter, until the old farmer told him he had education enough, and he could not go to school any more. This struck him like a thunderbolt. He was only fifteen years old, and had not a friend in the world. He told me it was then he offered his first prayer to God." Harold arose and walked the floor to hide his emotion. "It seemed the turning point in the boy's life," he continued. "The next morning he left the farm and went to the city, and he has worked his way ever since. Poor Charley, it has had a different effect on him than it would have on most men. I am afraid I

should have come out an infidel instead of the pure, true-hearted Christian he is."

The girls were very much interested in the recital. Kathey had never seen the young man, and she was thinking more of the way his friend was praising him, and how noble he looked at this time, than of the perfections of the less favored Charley.

"And has he no friends now," asked Edith, with tears in her eyes, "who could help him to something better than teaching a class of juniors at the University?"

"That is just it," and Harold sat down again. "He is that kind of fellow who often let pride get the better of judgment. Now, I am willing to admit that pride (self-respect as he calls it) is a good thing, but I know there are those who would deem it a privilege to help him, yet he will not accept one cent for himself. It is all wrong on his part."

The girls exchanged glances, and Kathey said, in a low, but firm tone, "I beg pardon, but are you sure that you are competent to sit in judgment in a matter you know so little about?"

There was a spirit of antagonism in the sentence, so new to this petted child of fortune that it awakened in him a keen interest for the girl who dared to say it.

"Well," said he, "perhaps I am talking in random, but, of course, I can tell what I would do if placed in like circumstances."

"What you think you would do, which you might

find would be very different from what you would really do."

Mr. Huntington looked a little piqued at her persistent contradiction, but it only increased his love and esteem for her, and made him aware of the fact that she had improved in strong womanly qualities as well as in personal appearance, especially when he remembered that she was defending the pride of his absent friend, although a stranger to her. They both laughed now, and Harold apologized for becoming so vehement on a subject that could not possibly interest entire strangers as it did him. Edith longed to hear more, but did not again refer to the subject.

When Harold reached his own room that night he felt pretty well convinced that the reason Kathey had slipped away from him two years ago was in some way connected with the McDonell's of Green Cliff. Geraldine had said something about Kathey's being so full of notions and fickle-minded, and he had taken it for granted that such was the case; but now he found her in her true position, at the head of her father's household, taking the care of a mother on her young shoulders, self-reliant and dignified. He loved her when he knew her at the age of eighteen, a happy, roguish girl, and he would then have made her his wife, and petted and cared for her, not letting a breath of vexation creep into her life, and keeping his own troubles, if he had any, from reaching her. This was the picture he always loved to look at. "But then," he would add, "I want some good, reliable friend to go to when I need counsel and advice, and,

of course, she could not be of any use to me in that capacity."

But now he thought differently. "What better, truer counsellor would a man need than this good, brave woman with no interest apart from his own, standing by his side through life, he to share her cares and anxieties, and she ever ready with counsel and sympathy for him? Could they not be all in all to each other?"

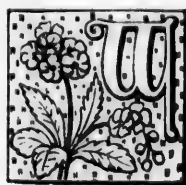
He believed now, with simple faith, that they had been kept apart by what seemed to him an unjust fate; then he would have married her; now they would marry each other.





CHAPTER VI.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.



WHEN the old stage coach turned away towards the depot on the morning of Montgomery's departure he felt he was not leaving Summerville exactly as he came. He had only been there two weeks, and with the exception of meeting with his old friend Harold, everything had gone just as he expected. As he thought of Harold, he looked back, and saw him talking pleasantly with Edith at the Post-office door. She was looking at the elegant young man in a way that brought the hot blood rushing to Charley's temples with a force that told him more plainly than words could have done, that there in that door-way, clad in the dainty drab serge walking-dress, was the one who had made his stay in that little village so different from what he had expected it to be; but he felt he was a fool to think of this young lady as anything but a passing acquaintance. How he chided himself for his folly; he so poor he could scarcely clothe himself decently, not even respectably, compared with Harold.

He looked away off over the fields, trying to think what a wide world this was, and wondering if in it somewhere there was not a place he might call home, and feel that there was one heart that beat for him alone.

"Here I am again wishing for something that it is not God's will for me to have," he said to himself impatiently, as the stage stopped and he walked towards the ticket office. While the agent was making the change he was thinking how glad he would be if that ticket would take him to the Pacific coast, instead of to the teaching and studying at the University; and yet how ungrateful he was. Had he not been very glad when that position was offered him? And how kind the Professor had been to him, and how kind everybody was to him. How the dear Church people in Summerville had said the most flattering things when he bade them good-bye on the last night he had preached to them, and made him promise he would come again at Christmas-time. He had promised then, thinking he would be glad to come, but now he did not want to see Summerville again. It seemed that all the worldly ambition that he had tried so hard to conquer was annoying him since he had come here, and so he decided that he had better stay away, and he would forget in time all the vexation he had endured. He was on the train by this time, and taking out his Bible he read on and on, finding relief and comfort in the study he so much loved.

He had an engagement to fill in another small

place, that would occupy a few weeks of his time before the University opened for the fall term, and he went direct to that place now, and did not hear anything from his friend until he arrived at his boarding-house, the week before his regular school work began. There he found two letters awaiting him. One he knew was from Harold, and he opened it first. It ran thus:

"*Dear Friend Charlie*,—I write to say that I am the happiest fellow alive.

"Next week I go to my home to make the cage ready for the beautiful wild bird I have been so fortunate as to capture. The old house has been shut up too long, and now I am going to have it opened and made fit for the happy bride who has promised to enliven it with her presence. I suppose you think I have gone daft, as the Scotch say, but if a man has a right to do or say a foolish thing once in his life, I believe when he is in love is the most proper time. Perhaps you would like to know who the young lady is that has succeeded in making me so happy. It is none other than Miss McDonell. There is quite a romance connected with our engagement, which we will be delighted to tell you when you visit us at our home at Christmas-time. We both join in sending you this invitation with our love.

H. H."

Montgomery never once raised his eyes from the page until he had finished reading all of his friend's letter, and when he did, it was to go back and read it all over again. He was not surprised, he told himself, and it was the best thing that could be done for

both of them; and yet he was not quite unselfish enough to say that he was glad, even for their sakes.

He arose and walked the floor for at least an hour. He knew now that he loved Edith McDonell with a love that could never be transferred to another; and he had not the least doubt that it was she whom Harold meant. He did not know that she had an elder sister. Mrs. Howell introduced a little girl to him in Church one night, and said it was Edith's sister, but he had scarcely thought of her at all, except to notice how unlike Edith she was, and that was all of the family he had ever seen. "A romance indeed," how it all came back to him now; how anxious Harold was to go to Smith's cottage as soon as he heard the name of Miss McDonell, and how she started and blushed when she was introduced to him, and how he had almost asked Roger for an invitation to call at the house. He threw himself into a chair, and tried to think calmly, what a good thing this marriage would be, how much Harold loved her, how could he help it! Then he arose, and paced the floor again.

Just then there was a tap at the door and his landlady entered with a pitcher of water, and when she retired, she said to her daughter, "I tell you it is hard work for them teachers, they look as if they were worried to death, studying so hard in them fusty old books. Well, I am glad I am not educated, although it does give a sort of polish to a person," and the good soul bustled about and tried to think of some-

thing nice that Mr. Montgomery would like for his supper. When an hour later he came down into the dining-room with the same careworn look on his handsome face, she hurried to tell him how glad she was to have him back again, at the same time putting on his plate a brown flakey biscuit, with its accompaniment of clear white honey, that seemed as if it would tempt the appetite of anyone.

His nature was so transparent that the darkness of his own soul only helped to reflect the good deeds of those around him, and when in the deepest trouble himself, he could see the more plainly the kindness shown him, and he turned on Mrs. Jones so thankful a face, that she could not refrain from asking him if anything had occurred to cause him trouble. He bowed his head for a moment, and then said as he looked up, "Oh, I am always wanting something the Lord thinks I am better without; and I am making myself unhappy, when I ought to be singing praises to God for His goodness." His supper was soon eaten, and when he went out of the dining-room and met the motherly women again, he grasped her hand and said, with quivering lip, "Pray for me that I may be patient."

"That I will," she said huskily, wiping her eyes with her apron.

He did not think of the other letter until he saw it lying on his table unopened the next morning. The hand writing was strange to him; he opened it with scarcely any curiosity, and glanced at the signature: it was from Joshua Smith. "He needs help, poor

fellow, no doubt, but he has applied to the wrong man, if it is money he wants." This is the letter:

"DENVER, Colorado.

"REV. MR. MONTGOMERY:

"*Dear Sir*,—I came here, as you know, about two months ago. My brother is in business, but as I could not do anything in his line, he secured for me a very good position with an old gentleman in failing health, who is a namesake of yours.

"I said to him one day that I knew a man by that name, and told him where. He said he had a brother that died about fifteen years ago; he had a wife, but he never knew whether they had any children or not; and then I praised you up all I could, and he was so interested that he put it in the hands of a lawyer, and *he* wrote to the place where Mr. Montgomery's brother lived, and found out that there was a boy ten years old and a girl one week old when the mother died. The lawyer told him yesterday that you were found, but that he could not find the girl. Perhaps you know something about her. The old man says he does not care for the girl, but he wants you to come at once. He is very rich and all alone in the world.

"You will probably hear from the lawyer, but I wanted to tell you first myself.

"Yours truly,

"JOSHUA SMITH."

Here was great news from an unexpected source. Mr. Montgomery held the open letter in his hand, and did not know whether to believe it or not; while he sat pondering on the contents and trying to recall to mind something that would help him to the truth of the matter, he heard the postman's whistle, and in

another minute the lawyer's letter was put into his hand. Let us look at this more business-like if less sincere epistle.

"DENVER, Colorado.

"MR. CHARLES MONTGOMERY :

"*Dear Sir*,—I write to say that I have been engaged for some time in looking up your relationship with a client of mine in this place, by name John Montgomery, and being satisfied that you are his nephew, son of his brother Charles, I write at his request to inform you that he would like to see you in this city as soon as you can conveniently make the journey.

"He wishes me to say that it is impossible for him to write, or go to your place, as his health would not permit it.

"Yours respectfully,

"RICHARD RAYMOND."

"P. S.—It will be very much to your advantage to come immediately. If you need any pecuniary help I shall be happy to accommodate you."

This last letter settled all doubts in the mind of the young man, and he began to make his preparations at once. He had not begun his work as teacher for the present term, and so he had no scholars to whom he must bid good-bye, yet he was pleased and made sad by the warm pressure of the hand he received from the professors and teachers, who, though rejoicing in his good luck, much regretted his departure. But he was ready at last; his last good-bye was to Mrs. Jones, who cried outright, assuring him that she would pray for him as long as she lived, and she

added, "I did not think there was any real good christian preachers until I met you. I thought them all hypocrites."

How much he would have liked to see Harold before he went so far away. He had been like a brother to him always, and he had needed his friendship so much; his own life was so lonely.

Then he thought of his little sister. Where would he find her? She must be fifteen if alive. He was at the depot now, and as a group of laughing, merry girls went by, he looked after them wondering what his sister would be like when he should find her.

He felt that he was going away from where she was most likely to be found, and yet it was all he could do; but he decided as soon as he arrived at his journey's end to begin an active search for the lost one, that she might share the good, if there was any, or at least that he could give her his love and protection, and she in return would love him as a sister. How good the word sounded to him. He had often thought of her, but had never been in a position to do what his heart most craved.

Now that he is on his way to the bright, beautiful city of Denver we shall leave him while we look at the inmates of Hill-Crest.

When we left Harold and Kathey, they had met for the first time in two years; now we find them in the beautiful month of October, all mysteries cleared away, and the last preparation completed. To-morrow is to be their wedding day.

They do not think, as they sit together in the twilight, that there is an unhappy soul in the universe. It was a warm, pleasant night, so they went out under the shadow of the vines, and seating themselves on a rustic seat, looked at each other as only lovers can.

In the parlor Edith was trying to entertain a young man whom Harold brought with him that afternoon to act as groomsman at the marriage, Edith being chosen by her sister for bridesmaid.

Adolphus VanArsdale was not exactly the kind of man Harold Huntington would have chosen for an intimate friend, but he had looked on Mr. Huntington as a sort of guide to help him in matters concerning American society, about which he was anxious to learn.

They had met for the first time in England, and Adolphus, then scarcely nineteen, had been completely taken with the "clever American," as he called him. He tagged him wherever he went, and declared that when he was his own boss he would go to the States to live.

He was a good, respectable young man; had been all his life nurtured by guardians and tutors; he had no immediate relatives, but had an immense fortune, which would be his own when he was twenty-one years old. He said to Harold, when he bade him good-bye on the wharf at Liverpool, that as soon as he came of age he would turn his property all into money and go to America, and settle as close to Mr. Huntington's place as he could get. There were tears in the

boy's eyes as he said this, and Harold, knowing the strong love for friends which exists among the English people, felt sure that he would keep his word; and therefore, he was not surprised, when going home from Summerville, he found Adolphus at Lake View, ready to receive him.

Harold was glad to see him, and felt a certain sense of duty toward the inexperienced youth who had so much money and so little experience. He advised him not to think of buying a house and establishing himself until he became better acquainted with the country. To this Adolphus readily assented. But when he heard that Green Cliff, the grounds adjoining Lakeview, were for sale, he became unmanageable, and Harold went with him, and the home of the McDonell's was transferred into the hands of the wealthy young Englishman. Not knowing exactly what step to take next, he accepted his friend's invitation to stay for a while at least in his home. And so it came about when Harold had made all other arrangements for the coming wedding, he had written to Edith that, with her permission, he would ask Adolphus VanArsdale to act as best man.

It would be very difficult to tell which of the young men was the more delighted over the coming event. There was nothing too grand for the occasion. Adolphus felt that this was the highest honor his friend could bestow upon him, and Harold was more than repaid for the favor by the joy the young man evinced.

They had driven up on the afternoon before the

eventful day, and so now we find Edith making herself as agreeable as possible to the guest, while Harold and Kathey, though so absorbed in each other, are not oblivious to the scene before them.

"If Charley could have answered me in time I should have offered him Adolphus' place," said Harold to Kathey; "but he was right in my house, and so I asked him, and he is very much delighted. He is carried away with style, but that is his only fault; he is honest, and his character is as pure as crystal. He will be at our place a great deal and you will use your influence to lead him to a higher aim in life, won't you, darling?" said Harold, leaning his head against the brown curls. "I am not going to be selfish, and I believe I love you better when I think how much you have done for your father's family. It must have been hard to stand in the place you have for the last twelve years.

"When we see a young mother with a family of children looking to her for guidance it seems perfectly natural, and we expect her mother's love is going to carry her through; but to see a young girl taking the entire care of a lot of disobedient little motherless waifs seems too bad, because it is no plan of hers that put this burden upon her."

These words seemed to Kathey the sweetest that her lover had ever said to her.

It is good to know for ourselves that we have done our duty, but words of appreciation from lips we love are like springs of cooling water in the barren desert.

"Oh," said Kathey, "I do not know that I always

accepted this responsibility in the spirit you give me credit for; and although I was very anxious that the girls should have an education, I think that Edith did more than I for the real comfort of the family. Yet, when I think of it, I guess we all contributed our share, for it is Grace who, for the last few years, has kept father's clothes in order and always anticipated his every wish."

"And what of Berthy?" said Harold, laughing.

"Oh, Berthy, Berthy—she is the problem of the family. While *we* tried to be contented with what we had, she never was, but was always yearning for an education and slipping away with a book that she could not understand a word of, and it made so much trouble. I think she ought to have had an opportunity to go to school, but father and Aunt Elizabeth would not hear of it. When she did go it was surprising how rapidly she learned, but she never thought of anything else, not even of her personal appearance, and that disgusted aunt so much that she would make her stay at home to punish her. I do not know whether it would have been right or not to encourage her in so burying herself in her books."

Kathey did not tell how hard she herself had worked to pay for her sister's tuition in a select school, and perhaps would never know how grateful Berthy was to her for the sacrifice she had made.

But she talked on of the family at home with a freedom of thought which she would have considered impossible a year ago.

Harold kept silent, for he liked to hear her talk.

There was a pure vein of unselfish womanliness in her conversation which made him congratulate himself that he had been able to secure so worthy a life companion, and it also made him have a better opinion of his own goodness that he should love this girl as passionately as he did.

The morning of the wedding was everything that could be desired in the way of beautiful fall weather. The early frost had turned to gold and crimson the maple trees that adorned the village streets. Here and there a sturdy oak and hickory showed more gold and still retained a dash of green; but the maples had changed their dress at the first intimation of winter, knowing that the beauty of the autumn was largely due to them. Late flowers were blooming in the garden; dahlias and china-asters had come out late, that Flora's devotees might not miss so much the fragrant rose or favorite lily.

The marriage service was to be performed very early in the morning, that the bridal party might have time to go to Lake View before night, where a reception awaited them.

Adolphus was up early, for there was so much depending on him. His new suit had been taken out the night before, and brushed until not a speck of dust could be seen on the fine cloth.

"It is all right," said Grace to Berthy. "I like to see a young man particular about his personal appearance."

"But," said Berthy, "it is all he thinks about, he has not one moment to spare for anything else. I

did so want to ask him about his journey from England, but he is so absorbed in himself that he scarcely knows a word that anyone says to him. And then he does not appear very well after all; it keeps him all the time brushing off imaginary dust and feeling his hair to see if it is on his head, and he loses sight of everything that is going on around him. No wonder he knows so little, if he is well educated."

"Well," said Grace, "what is education for if it is not to make a person appear well in society, and if they allow themselves to become a slouch in order to get an education I don't see what use it is to them."

Berthy was beaten for the time, as she always was by her sister's practical arguments, although it did not make any difference in her way of thinking or habits of dress.

Aunt Elizabeth had returned home. She had heard of the wedding, and would have liked to make Kathey believe that in some way she had been instrumental in bringing it about; but this she could not do, as she had fled from the impending disgrace of the previous summer, when Geraldine and Roger were expected. It seemed to her very foolish now, as she thought of it and learned that they were much poorer than themselves, having not even a home, but being dependent on the kindness of friends for a shelter.

So she had written herself to invite the McDonell's to the wedding, and had received an answer only yesterday, saying that Geraldine had been so fortunate as to get a position as saleswoman in a dry goods store, where she thought she could earn enough to

support herself and mother, so she could not come. There was not a word concerning Roger, and Berthy wondered what had become of him.

When the wedding guests had taken their leave (only a few intimate friends of the families being invited) the house seemed very lonely. Edith had gone with her sister to her new home, much to the delight of Mr. VanArsdale, who was trying his best to fall in love with her.

Mr. and Mrs. Howell had lingered a few moments to talk to Mr. McDonell and the remaining members of the family, but now they, too, had gone.

Berthy went into the parlor to get a bouquet she intended to give to Mrs. Kenyon, and was tying it with a bit of white ribbon, when a shadow in the doorway caused her to look up, and there stood Roger, smiling at her in the old, familiar way, just as if three months had not elapsed since he stood there before.

"Oh, Roger! how glad I am to see you. Where did you come from? And why didn't you get here in time for the wedding?"

She poured out all she had to say in her impulsive way, without giving him time to answer. But he waited until she had finished, and then told her: first, that he had been all over the country since his father died trying to make a living. He had done all kinds of things; "But I tell you, Berthy," he said, "it comes hard on a fellow to have to work when he does not know how to do anything."

His cousin could see that there was a great change

in Roger, and, young as she was, she did not think he had improved any.

His clothes looked a little worn, and he had a sort of careless air that filled the girl's kind heart with pity.

"We received a letter from Geraldine yesterday, and she is going to be a saleswoman in a dry goods store," said Berthy. "Why don't you get some such position?"

"Oh, I can't sell dry goods; I don't know how, and I get so tired of getting up every morning and going to work, seeing other fellows having a good time, running around with nothing to do. And then, I wonder what is the use of my working since no one cares for me now," said he, despondently. "The very boys I used to give money to and take them out for a week at a time in my yacht will hardly notice me now, and it makes me mad and discouraged."

It pained Berthy to hear him say these things, and she laid her hand on his (they were sitting on the sofa) and said, "Roger, do not say there is no one to care for you; you have a mother," and she put great emphasis on the word. It had always seemed to her that to have a mother was the acme of human bliss. But her cousin only laughed a cold, hard laugh, such as one hears sometimes from an old worn-out man, but seldom from a boy of nineteen. The girl drew back from him; she did not understand the meaning of that laugh, but she did not like the sound of it. It seemed so unlike the bright, mirthful merriment that she remembered so well.

Roger noticed the movement and the expression on her face, and hastened to say, "My mother does not care a straw for me. Two weeks ago I was sick, and went where she and Geraldine have rooms, and she scolded all the time I was there. After I went to bed Geraldine gave me some cough medicine, but mother never came near me, and in the morning I got up and went away. As I was going she said, if I got a situation to let her know, as she had to depend upon Geraldine and me for her support. And she makes it warm for Dene, I tell you. She says if she had tried she might have been married to some rich man by this time, and they might have had a good home. Oh! when I hear so much talk about 'mother-love,' it makes me tired. There is just as much difference in women as there is in men, and every one knows that all men are not good fathers."

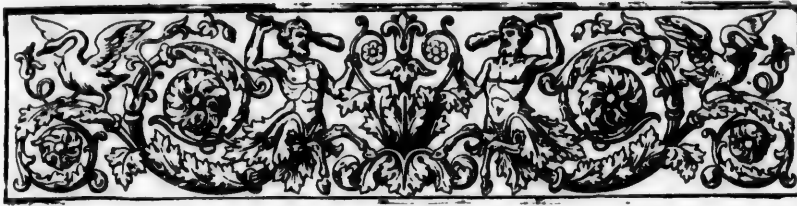
"I do not know anything about a mother myself," said Berthy, "only what I have seen of Mrs. Kenyon's love for Ray, and sometimes I have to try real hard to keep from being jealous of her, they seem so happy together."

"Don't mention her, if you please, as the ordinary mother; she is the exception, not the rule."

Roger stayed all night with his uncle, and the girls tried to persuade him to stay longer, but he said he had promised to meet a fellow he knew at a little town about six miles from Summerville, who had said he could help him to make some money, and so Roger must go, as money was the thing he most needed at present.

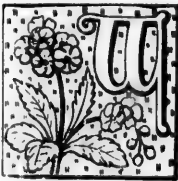


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CHAPTER VII.

"IN PRISON, AND YE CAME UNTO ME."



AS there ever a little village without a gossip? We have tried so far to ignore their very existence; but candor demands that at least Mrs. Crosby be brought into this narrative. She lived a short distance from Hill-Crest, and although she was never invited to call or visit at Mr. McDonell's house, yet she contrived to go there once in a while, as she told the girls that she believed in being friendly. The fact that Kathey *was* married and gone, and she had never suspected that there was a wedding on hand, would serve to double her diligence in the future.

Aunt Elizabeth was secretly glad to have her come. Secretly, I say, because she did not dare to say she enjoyed her company, for fear the girls would think her coarse and uncultured; but when the little woman came in and revealed some hidden skeleton from a neighbor's closet, and gave such undivided attention to Miss Elizabeth's statements concerning things she

wanted the people of the village to know or believe about herself, she was particularly gratified, and would say after she was gone, "Now, Mrs. Crosby will have something to tell; she is a very dangerous person, and you girls must be careful what you say to her. Of course I must use her well, she has such a slanderous tongue, and if she gets angry at anyone there is nothing too bad for her to say."

About a week after Roger had gone from the home of his uncle, Mrs. Crosby came in one morning to make a call, or rather to get a recipe for ginger cookies.

She was a first-class housekeeper; every part of her work was done in the right time, with the feeling no doubt that all the neighbors were looking critically at her as she did at them. It behooved her, she thought, to keep her house always ready for inspection.

"You see," she said this morning, speaking rapidly, "I had a most *magnificent* recipe, but Selina Bonesteel, when they had them Rogers to see them this summer, came and borrowed it, and I ran over there this morning, while John was eating his breakfast, to get it. Selina met me at the door (I went around to the front for, as I told John, there was a light there until after twelve o'clock last night, and I thought they might have company again, so if I went to the front door I might perhaps see who it was). As I said, Selina met me and said, kinder short like, that she had lost it, and shut the door bang in my face; and, Elizabeth Williams, would you believe it,"

she continued, speaking slowly now and emphasizing every word, "*that Selina Bonesteel was all dressed up in a new brown silk dress.* I tell you it means something. John said when I told him, that perhaps her fellow, that young Rogers, was the one that was arrested and brought here to jail yesterday, he heard his name was Rogers, any way. So I hailed the paper boy and bought a paper from him, just to see if it was really so," and Mrs. Crosby produced the morning paper from the depths of her pocket, and handing it to her friend said, "there, read the police news, and then we will *know* all about it." She was not able to read herself, and as Miss Elizabeth could not see the fine print without glasses, and would not let Mrs. Crosby know she had to wear them, the paper was given to Berthy to read. The two ladies could not stop talking at once, they were "wound up," and had to run a while before they could listen to what Berthy had to read to them, and it was just as well; for what the girl saw in the police news so paralyzed her that for a moment she could hardly see the paper, but the women had run down now, and were waiting for her to give them another impetus for talk. But while they waited the sound of wheels were heard, and springing to the window, Mrs. Crosby saw Clinton Rogers and Selina Bonesteel flying past in a carriage, with white veil and gloves, their smiling faces denoting so much happiness, that she forgot the paper and police column and the ginger cookies entirely, and rushed out of the house to tell Mrs. Moore, her other neighbor, *that Selina Bonesteel was*

actually married, and she had seen her wedding dress, and it was brown silk.

Aunt Elizabeth was so much interested herself that she ran to the front window to see if she could get another glimpse of the bride, but they were gone before she could get there, and so she sat down in a rocking chair, to rest from her unusual exertion.

Berthy was left alone. She clutched the paper in her hand, scarcely daring to believe what her eyes so plainly saw. "Two young men, Walter Rand and Roger McDonell, were arrested at Domimville on Saturday for working a wheel of fortune at the county fair; they were fined ten dollars. Rand paid, but McDonell was brought here and lodged in the jail." This was what Berthy was staring at in the paper when Aunt Elizabeth came back into the room.

Seeing the girl still standing where she had left her, she snatched the paper out of her hand with the remark, "It seems to me that when you get hold of a paper or book you don't know what you are doing. It is a blessing that you have some one to keep you from making such a fool of yourself as you would like to, if you had your own way. Now, go and see if you cannot find something to do besides reading."

It was nothing new for Berthy to have these things said to her, and at any other time they would have been met with a response equally as sharp. But this morning her thoughts were so much taken up with what she had just read that her aunt's rebuke passed unnoticed. Her only thought just

now was, how she could keep the terrible disgrace a secret, or how she could help her cousin out of that dreadful place; it made her shudder to think of it.

She picked up the paper and went away to her own room, and sat down to think the matter over. Her heart seemed nearly breaking; Roger had been in prison all night, and while she was sleeping in a soft bed he was lying on a hard floor.

"Poor Roger, poor Roger!" and her tears fell fast as she thought of what he had said about his mother not caring for him.

"What had he now to live for, with the disgrace of a night spent in prison, always before him. A night! surely it might be many nights; and then, like a flash of sunlight, she thought of the ten dollars that Roger had given her. She had it yet, and had intended to give it to him when he was there, but somehow she had been afraid it would hurt his feelings.

What would she do now? How could she get the money into his hands? She was pondering on the subject when Grace came to tell her there was someone in the parlor who wanted to see her.

Berthy went slowly out into the dining-room, and stopping at the glass to see how her eyes looked, heard Aunt Elizabeth telling some one that she had more trouble with Berthy than all the rest of the girls. "It's all on account of her being so fond of reading. If she could be kept from seeing a book or paper she might, perhaps, become quite useful. Only this

morning she stood for nearly half an hour with the morning paper in her hand, and when I felt it my duty to remind her of the time she was spending so foolishly she just snatched up the paper and ran into her room, and we could hear her cry with all her might. Oh, she is very hard to manage. I hope, if she ever gets married, her husband will just set down his foot that he will not have a bit of reading matter in the house. It is the only way there is of getting any work out of her." Berthy's first impulse was to rush in and tell the visitor what she had to endure; but as she opened the door and saw the sweet face of Ray Kenyon, her temper cooled somewhat, and when that young lady greeted her warmly, giving her a kiss on the cheek, and scolding her at the same time for keeping her waiting so long, Berthy was restored to good humor at once.

Aunt Elizabeth seemed very angry when she promised to go and spend the day with Mrs. Kenyon. Rachel was obliged to go away and did not want to leave her mother all alone. This was her business with Berthy, and as the two girls went away together Aunt Elizabeth vented her wrath by saying she guessed the Kenyon's did not amount to much or they would not be so taken up with Berthy.

When Rachel had gone and Berthy and Mrs. Kenyon had settled themselves for an afternoon visit, the keen eyes of the Quaker matron saw in the face and spirit of the young girl, that there was something amiss, and with her usual sagacity set about finding a way to comfort and instruct. Berthy had seemed

very happy of late, with a prospect of a chance to study all Rachel's books and with the refined companionship of these worthy people. And then, too, a bit of good luck had come to her father. About two weeks before Kathey was married a letter had been sent to him, enclosing a check for five hundred dollars, saying that the person sending it owed him a debt of gratitude, and that he should use the money and not ask any questions. And what had surprised his youngest daughter most was that her father insisted on her having a good supply of clothes provided at once. Of course, she enjoyed this immensely, but would have been indignant had she known that he also hinted that she ought to be sent to school, and that Aunt Elizabeth had used her influence to prevent it. But she had never heard of the good fortune that had nearly fallen into her hands, and so was very happy with what she did receive of the timely present to her father.

Berthy did not want her old friend to know anything concerning Roger's whereabouts, for she thought he and Rachel were more to each other than the mother had ever suspected, and if Rachel found out about it——. Oh, it made her sick to think of it, and it also made her so quiet and absent-minded that afternoon that her hostess finally asked her if there was anything the matter.

Berthy thought at first she would say there was not, or plead a headache (that "scape goat" that is so universally used for all the heartaches that flesh is heir to), but when she looked in the kind, motherly

face, there was something in it that made a lie impossible and wrung from her unwilling lips the whole story of Roger's crime and penalty.

Mrs. Kenyon had expected to hear some of Berthy's own short-comings told with more than necessary pathos, but here was something that very closely concerned herself. She had not been blind to the feeling that the young man had inspired in her daughter, but, like the wise mother that she was, did not seem to notice any growing sentiment between the young people while watching the development of what might in a few years become the turning point in both of their lives. She had liked Roger, and had not regretted the loss of his father's money. "For now," she argued with herself, "he will have an opportunity to cultivate the talents that I am sure he has, but having his every want supplied his energies would never be used."

Berthy, in her characteristic way, had told Mrs. Kenyon everything, all Roger had said about his mother and his aimless life.

It was a revelation to that true Christian woman; and she thanked God in her heart that she had been kept free from the folly of fashionable life, if it was to rob a *mother* of her holiest mission—her children's love and welfare.

"Berthy," said the Quakeress, "what thee has told me has surprised me very much, and I do not know what God would have me to do in this matter, or if I could do anything; but I will ask thee that thee will not tell Rachel or anyone about it, and if, after taking

it to God in prayer, I can see any way I can help the poor lad I am willing to follow it. It is a very sad affair, and one a woman can hardly deal with." She looked at the little brass clock on the mantle, and said, in a business-like tone of voice, "Rachel will be home in an hour, and if thee will leave me alone now, I will be prepared by that time to say what can or cannot be done for the boy."

There was no choice for Berthy but to bid her friend good-bye, and take herself back to her home. She felt quite certain that the conscientious Quakeress would devise some plan for the release of her unfortunate cousin. She knew by what she had read in the paper that money would be all that was necessary to get him clear; but she had not made this known to Mrs. Kenyon, so that lady did not understand fully what would be required; but, with the habit she had formed early in life of taking all matters to God in prayer, she went to her room as soon as Berthy was gone and, kneeling at her bed-side, asked her wise Counsellor what she could do for this worse-than, motherless boy. She felt as she bowed there a great love coming into her heart for the erring one. She felt almost a mother's eagerness that this hour of affliction might be to him an awakening of thoughts that would lead to his soul's salvation. While she prayed there came to her mind thoughts of her own boy, who was sleeping now in Peace Cemetery, and she gave a little start as she remembered that to-day was the anniversary of his birthday, and if he were living he would be twenty—just about Roger's age. Some friends

had said to her when he died, that perhaps he was saved from something worse than death, but the fond mother could not believe that any harm could ever come to her beloved baby with her protecting care always about him; she knew less of the world then than now, and she thought as she looked at her angel child so still and white in his little casket that nothing could ever reconcile her to his loss; but now, after a lapse of eighteen years, she bowed her head to God's will, and thanked Him fervently for taking the "sweet innocent" to himself when He did. It was a consoling thought that he was in heaven now, safe from sin or temptation.

When she arose from her knees there was in her heart an overwhelming desire to do something for the young man in so forlorn a condition. But this good woman did not exactly know what to do. As she sat down in the low chair by the little work table, the Bible that was always lying there caught her eye, and she opened it with the same spirit that had actuated her when she prayed for guidance, just saying as she took the precious book into her hand, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." As the words of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew met her gaze she wondered if she was a wise or foolish virgin, and then read on to the parable of the talents, and asked God in her heart to help her to use her's aright. This was one of her favorite chapters, and she had nearly forgotten the purpose for which she had taken up the book, when her eyes suddenly came to the appropriate words, "I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Here

was the message; it was the voice of the Master, she dared not disobey, and as she sat there with the book in her hand her daughter came into the room.

"What, mother, are you all alone? Where is Berthy?"

"Oh! she went home some time ago, but I have been reading, and have not been lonely."

And then Rachel began telling her mother how fortunate she had been to secure the promise of a department in the village school to teach for the coming winter. Her mother was sincerely thankful for this, and they sat down to their supper with minds at rest as to the means of the income which it was necessary to provide.

They had scarcely finished eating when, with a light tap on the sitting room door, Berthy came smilingly in and took a seat with them.

"You naughty girl," said Rachel, "why did you run away before I came home? I have a notion now not to tell you what good luck I have had this afternoon."

"Do not blame Berthy," said Mrs. Kenyon, smiling at her daughter's saucy face, "it was my fault, I think. I wanted to read, and so perhaps was not very good company."

Berthy saw that Rachel did not know anything about their afternoon talk, and thought it best that she should be kept in ignorance as to the cause of it, as long as possible; and so she began to ask her questions concerning her school. They chatted on for an hour, to all appearances free from any thought

beside what they were saying, but Berthy's heart was heavy all the time, thinking of the inmate of one cell of the county jail.

Before she went home Mrs. Kenyon took the opportunity (while Rachel ran up stairs to get a book to show Berthy) to say that she herself would go to the jail in the morning and have a talk with Roger. Berthy was very grateful, and slipped into her hand the ten dollar bill, done up in a little package, with her own name written on it. She had no time to give her friend any message for him, as Rachel that minute came back into the room, and after a little more talk, she bade her friends good-bye and went home.

The next morning about ten o'clock, as Grace was out sweeping off the walk she said to Berthy, "Just look at Mrs. Kenyon going down street. I never saw her look so 'Quakery' as she does this morning, all in grey." And as Berthy looked out, she thought so too, but knew perfectly well why she had taken the pains to appear a little more prim, for did she not realize that the errand she was on demanded the recommendation of that quiet garb?

Mrs. Kenyon did not see the girls, but walked on briskly until she came to the large iron gate that closed the yard surrounding the county buildings. It had always been a part of the town that she had carefully avoided. It made her sad to look at those barred windows, and think that anyone was kept here away from liberty; but now, as she neared the place, although in no hurry to view the misery she expected to see inside, she was, nevertheless, anxious

to go on her way and carry what consolation she could to him she had come to comfort and advise.

When she made known her errand to the man in charge, she was handed over to the turnkey, who received her very politely, and led the way to the inner court. He was a tall, finely-built young man, and as he walked before Mrs. Kenyon through the long, narrow passage that separated the court-house from the outer door of the jail, she could not but notice how proudly he carried himself, with his shoulders thrown back and head erect. She wondered if this was so responsible and exalted a position that he could possibly feel the dignity of it enough to cause that conscious importance. But when, with a great clanging of keys and unbolting of bars, they were at last admitted into the corridor, and she had time to witness the shrinking servitude of the men and boys that were there, she did not wonder that this young official felt his position as one of personal honor, seeing so many submitting daily to his authority.

Roger was in his cell. Although the door was open he did not care to come out and mingle with the others, some of whom had been there before so many times that they did not mind the confinement, and had ceased to care for the disgrace.

He was lying on his couch, but sprang up as the turnkey slapped him on the shoulder and said in a sharp voice, "Here, young man, is a lady come to see you." Mrs. Kenyon was trembling violently. When she entered the prison-door it seemed so strange that

she should be in such a place at all, and stranger still, that she had come to see a young man whom a few months before she had invited to her house as an equal in social standing with her own family; and when she saw him now, in that little dark hole, it seemed to her that what strength she had summoned to her aid would utterly forsake her.

Roger was the first to speak. He had learned a good many things since he had been here. On Sunday a minister and some young men from a Christian society had come to the jail, and had sung and prayed with the prisoners. Roger, at home, had been taught to believe that all a preacher wanted was money and popularity, and as he knew very well that there was neither of these to be found in this place he was beginning to learn that there were other motives deeper and more sacred. So he was not so much surprised to see this little Quaker woman standing in his cell as she was to find herself there, and yet he would rather have had almost anyone else see his misfortune than the mother of Rachel. He thought that she, too, knew of his disgrace, and had perhaps asked her mother to come. The thought cut his pride like the sharp edge of a knife, but he would not seem ungrateful, and so he held out his hand to her, and said in a choking voice, "You are very kind to come and see a poor fellow like me."

As Mrs. Kenyon took his hand in hers and sat down on the hard couch by his side all her embarrassment left her, and she talked to him freely of the situation, listening patiently, to the story that sounded

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so reasonable. He had all his life seen these different modes of gambling used at public gatherings; had heard people say that there was a law against them, but it was never enforced, and perhaps it would not have been in his case, but some young farmer, who wanted to make a "haul," as he expressed it, had bet heavily on the turn of the wheel. Fortune had gone against him, and so out of revenge he had suddenly become wonderfully conscientious, saying, "That this sort of lawlessness ought to be punished." Therefore the wheel-of-fortune boys were handed over to the proper authorities, with what result we already know.

Roger had acknowledged his part in the affair, but did not tell his friend how sorely he needed the money that he expected to make out of the transaction, nor did he mention how his partner had paid his own fine and gone on, leaving him to serve out his time in prison.

After they had talked over the misfortune, and Mrs. Kenyon had heard and sympathized with all that Roger had to tell her, she took out her little Bible, and said in her sweetest tone, "Now we will try and find out in what way God is using this circumstance to bring a blessing to thee. For, of course, thou and I know we are children of a wise Father, and he never does anything without a purpose, and though it seems to us now, there is nothing in this but dire affliction, yet it is done to benefit us in some way. We will first seek the cause, and then prayerfully accept the lesson." And opening the Book at the 69th Psalm, she read of David's affliction. As

she read the eighth verse, "I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children," Roger buried his face in his hands, and his whole frame shook with intense emotion.

She read on until the twentieth verse, "Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness. I looked for some to take pity but there was none, and for comforters but I found none."

Then turning to the one hundred and third Psalm she read the encouraging words written there in a cheerful voice, at the same time smoothing the curly locks of the bowed head with her soft hand, saying, when she was through, "This is what God intends you to receive. Remember the words: 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' Those that fear and love God are his own children, and he will take care that no harm comes to them, or any trouble that He will not give them grace to bear."

They sat in silence for some time, and then Roger raised his head and looked into the face of the woman by his side. "Do you think if I prayed to God He would hear me and make me as good a Christian as you are?" he said, speaking so earnestly that it thrilled her heart with pity.

"Yes, yes, a better Christian, a more useful one. A young man like thee, with bright talents, and good health and a finished education, what might thee not hope to do for Christ, besides merely being saved thyself?"

"Oh!" said Roger, "if I could only save myself

from ever committing any more sin and keep clear of bad company, and—and—" he said, "if I only had a friend or money to help me, then I would have something worth living for, but the way seems so dark." And he dropped his head in his hands again

"Thee cannot save thyself, but if thee will look to Christ and trust in Him, He will be the best friend to thee."

She intended to pray with the penitent once before she went, but just then the turnkey made his appearance, again telling them that the time was up, and stood there rattling his bunch of keys, while Mrs. Kenyon bade Roger good-bye and put into his hand the package that Berthy had given her for him, and in another moment she was out in the yard. She was crying softly, and as the official was leaving her he said, "It is too bad the chap can't raise the money to pay his fine. He could soon earn it if he once got out."

Mrs. Kenyon turned an enquiring face on the man, and he saw that she did not fully understand what he meant, for she said: "I thought he was put in for the crime of gambling!"

"So he was, Mrs., but you see if he had the money, ten dollars, as the other fellow had, he could have paid his fine and he need not have come here."

"So he was put in prison for his poverty, not for his crime."

"Well—not exactly that," said the man getting very red in the face. "Of course that is the *law*, ten

dollars fine or sixty days' imprisonment. He had no money, so he had to be sent up."

"Poor boy! No money, no friends," said Mrs. Kenyon, at the same time taking out her little pocket-book and giving to the official the required ten dollars. "Here, pay the fine and let him go, but it does seem a queer way to raise the moral standard of a community."

When Roger was left alone it did seem to him that his burdens were greater than he could bear. He threw himself on his bed, if a prison cot can be called by so respectable a name, and gave an almost heart-broken wail. He realized for the first time that what he had lacked all his life was the Christian influence of a good mother. How well he remembered that the boys used to say to him, "I tell you, McDonell, you have got the right kind of an old woman at your house. She is not forever worrying about your long goings and short comings, like ours." And he had thought himself it was kind of jolly that she let him have his own way so much. But now he knew if she had loved him as she ought she would have been anxious on his account, as any fond mother is; and now that he was in trouble, how sweet it would be to feel *her* caressing hand on his head as he had felt the hand of that blessed old woman as she sat by his side. There was a great difference between these two women, and it suddenly dawned on his mind that it was the love of God in the heart of one and the love of the world in the heart of the other that made the difference.

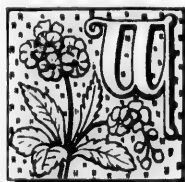
All the afternoon Roger wrestled with himself, the conviction growing stronger in him each moment that he ought to make a complete surrender of his will to the will of God. As the shadows began to creep into the corner of the old jail and the last ray of sunlight fade away it seemed his life was going out forever, and falling on his knees in his darkened cell he cried to God for mercy and forgiveness in so contrite a heart and voice that the angels at the throne of heaven must have heard and bewailed his agony. Half the night his soul was bowed before God in humble submission; but at last a great peace came to him, and he felt his prayers had been answered, and he lay down on his couch to rest in the consciousness that there was before him a new life opening. And he was comforted in the thought that henceforth he was God's child, and as his eyes closed in sleep the last words he thought of were those of the Psalm: "Like as a father pitieth his children."

As the morning sun peeped through the grated window of the prison and shone into cell No. 4 it lit up with a halo the curly locks of hair that lay on the peaceful sleeping brow of Roger McDonell, and there we will leave him for the present.



CHAPTER VIII.

IN DENVER.



WHEN we last saw Charley Montgomery he was on his way to claim relationship with an old man whom he had never seen. It seemed a very proper thing to do, however, as this friendless uncle of his needed his companionship, and if he liked him and would help him to pursue his studies by the aid of the money he was reported to have such an abundance of there would be in reality mutual benefit.

As he entered the depot on the day and hour designated in his last letter the first face he saw was that of Josh Smith. It was well that he knew the features, for his appearance was so changed that I think there were times when Joshua himself found it difficult to recognize in the well-dressed and stylish gentleman the shabby-genteel individual of Summerville notoriety. Certain it was that, although he never for a moment was ashamed of the name of Smith, he declared he had long been disgusted with the old-fashioned cognomen of Joshua, and begged his friends

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to call him Theodore instead. So when Charley met his friend and was handed a card, bearing the inscription on its smoothly polished surface, "Theodore J. Smith, Esq.," he grasped the situation and Theodore's hand at the same time and said, "I am glad to see you, Mr. Smith." A carriage and span of glossy black horses were in waiting to take them to the residence of John Montgomery, a beautiful brown-stone house in the vicinity of Highland Park. Its solid grandeur told of the wealth of the retired inmate.

As he was shown into the broad hall a servant met him with the request that he would go at once to her master's room. Charley demurred at this, as he was dusty and scarcely felt that he was presentable in a gentleman's drawing room; but the woman came close to him and said in a whisper, "You had better go just as you are, he is very odd and may not like to be kept waiting." In the carriage Theodore had said to him, "You will find the old man very odd." But as he did not say any more, Charley had entirely forgotten it, until he got this reminder from the woman at the door. So he stopped for a moment at the mirror resting on the hands of a marble cherub in the hall, brushed his hair, and then signified to the servant his readiness to be led in to meet his august relative.

The room occupied at present by Mr. Montgomery, senior, was at the very back of the house, but on the ground floor. There was a long hall almost as dark as night and several richly furnished rooms through which to pass. At last a large baize-covered door

was carefully opened, and a rush of sunlight revealed to the young man the interior of his uncle's private apartment. Reclining on a sofa was an old man, probably seventy-five years of age, and in another part of the room, sitting in a stiff high-backed chair, was a younger man. They were both dressed in black, and seemed very much excited about something at the moment the visitor entered. The woman that had shown Mr. Montgomery into the room closed the door behind him, and retired saying not a word. It was a very embarrassing position for a stranger, and Charley felt just a little vexed at being used in this way. To be ushered into this elegantly furnished parlor without having time given him to prepare a suitable toilet, and to be left standing in the middle of the floor without so much as an introduction seemed to him as though he was being treated as an intruder, and he was ready to resent it.

"I beg your pardon," he said, addressing the elder man, "I understood this was the apartment of John Montgomery, am I right?"

"You are, sir, and is this Charles Montgomery?"

"It is," said Charley, "at your service."

"Humph!" said his uncle, "sit down until I look at you," at the same time shoving a chair toward him with his foot.

It was all so strange a proceeding that it became ludicrous, and Charley laughed as he took his seat preparatory to being looked at.

"Does my personal appearance have anything to do with my identity," he said good humoredly.

"No, not your personal appearance, perhaps," was the gruff answer, "but your personal inclinations have got a sight to do with me; and I may as well tell you at once that if what I have heard about you of late is true I will have nothing to do with you, if you are my brother's son."

"And what have you heard, may I ask?" said Charley, his face reddening at the implied insult.

"Well, I have heard that you were studying to be a preacher, and if that is so you will have to give it up, that is all," he said, modifying his first assertion somewhat.

"Well, you have heard the exact truth, I have been studying now for two years, and in another year I shall be ordained. If my life is spared it will be devoted to this work, and I trust that nothing will prevent my finishing the course I have mapped out." He said it in a proud, independent manner, as one who had no idea of changing his mind or purpose.

The old man arose from his seat on the sofa and stood before his nephew, his tall form bent forward and his keen black eyes shining with suppressed passion.

"Do you mean by that, that you will not give up preaching for anything I can offer? Do you realise what you are throwing away?"

"This is not the first time in my life that I have been tempted with gold, and I say to you now what I have said before, that no mere worldliness can tempt me to disobey the call of the Gospel."

"Bosh," said the old man, "I hate preachers, and I

hate the churches, and I hate everything." He threw himself back in a big chair, and unbuttoned his coat and vest, and breathed hard, as though his last remark had somehow smothered him. Charley felt a growing pity for the man, here in his old age saying he hated everything, and he looked at the other gentleman in an inquiring way, which made *him* feel that he was called upon for an explanation the old gentleman did not seemed inclined to give.

"You see, sir, my friend here has very peculiar views in regard to religion," said that gentleman in a smooth low voice, "and we were speaking before you came in concerning your profession. It seems that Theodore did not mention it when he was telling Mr. Montgomery about you. You say you have not been ordained yet; now, let me advise a compromise."

Charley by this time surmised that the man was Richard Raymond, the lawyer, and he was right. He had been the friend and business manager of John Montgomery for the last ten years, and had got along with the peculiar, passionate old man as no one else had been able to do. When the latter heard that his only brother's son was alive and would come and live with him he was delighted, but he gave Mr. Raymond to understand that his business would still be in his hands as formerly.

When the shrewd lawyer advised a compromise it was only to give the younger man a hint to leave the subject of contention out of the question for a while, for it was very plain that his uncle could not live long, and with the possession of the immense wealth he would

undoubtedly receive he could then pursue whatever he chose. He evidently did not know Charley in thinking he could prevaricate in any way. The young preacher did not seem to notice the remark of Mr. Raymond about a compromise, but was very anxious concerning the condition of the infuriated old man.

"I should be glad," said the lawyer, arising and throwing open the window, "to be able to see you at peace on this point, for I think you could be of great help and comfort to each other, and the subject at issue is too trifling a one to cause a rupture of friendship, not to say a severing of relationship."

"It is no trifling subject to me," said John Montgomery, his breath coming easier, "I have been imposed upon and cheated and robbed by *Christians* all my life. This city is full now of rascally preachers, going around building high churches and begging for the poor, and putting the money in their own pockets, the lazy scoundrels." Charley knew there was no use in arguing, for the man was not in the mood to listen to reason, so he sat silent.

"How did it ever happen that you thought of being a preacher?" and his uncle's voice sounded a little more composed, but still scornful.

How gladly at any other time, in a more congenial company, would Charley Montgomery have told how he had heard the call, and how successful he had been in the little time he had devoted to this work. Had not his friend Harold said to him that he did not

understand true religion, until he saw him in the miserable home of the Smith's? He could count a score of young men that had accepted Christ through his instrumentality. Did he want any better proof that he must continue in the way which the Lord had marked out for him? Of course there were times when the way seemed closed up, but he had always found that it was his own fault in something he had done or said in an unguarded moment that had caused what he was sometimes tempted to attribute to divine Providence.

With the sceptical sneering face of his uncle so near him waiting for a reply to his own impudent question, he did not purpose to lay himself open to further ridicule, so he arose to his feet in a calm, dignified manner and said, "It is my calling, that is all." There was something in the tone he used that forbade further questionings, and, he continued, addressing his uncle, "I believe there is no use of prolonging this interview. I am free to say we have both been disappointed; you have probably been to great expense looking me up, and I have lost an opportunity of work in coming here, which I will not be likely to get again; but we both have lived long enough to know that life is made up of just such vicissitudes, so we can only make the best of this experience, and profit by its lesson if possible." And turning to the lawyer he said, in the same calm voice, "Will you please ring for some one to show me out?" There was a tone of command and settled purpose in the request, that,

although trivial, must be obeyed, and accordingly a woman soon appeared to take the young man out of the house, which he had entered less than an hour before with the feeling that it was to be his home for the future. He did not spend a moment in bidding his aged relative good-bye, but just bowed himself out in the same way he would have done from the presence of a mere stranger; and in a few minutes more was on the street.

The afternoon was far spent, and as Charley found himself standing alone in that strange city a feeling of utter desolation took possession of him. He had not been prepared for any such calamity as this. To come here and be companion to his father's only brother had been all he had thought of. Now, here he was among perfect strangers, no place to go, and with scarcely any money.

To do him justice he had not thought of himself while his uncle was berating the religion he professed, but now as he had time to consider his situation he found it very discouraging indeed.

He stood for a few moments looking up and down the street; here and there a light flashed out, warning him of the approach of night. Where would he go, what would he do? He now remembered that perhaps the servants would see him standing there and wonder at it; so he walked away, thinking how very surprised they looked when he came out. But he had no time to think of these insignificant matters; the question was, "What shall I do to get a living here, and where shall I stay to-night?" As he

thought of this he drew from his pocket the last of his money, only two or three dollars, which would soon disappear ; but he would not despair, the text came to him almost like a human voice, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." He strode on the length of one block, and had just turned the corner, when he heard his name called, and turning hastily saw, a few steps behind him, his uncle's lawyer.

As that gentleman overtook him he said, good naturedly, "You are a very fast walker ; I have almost had to run to keep up with you. I want you to come with me to my home, where we can talk this matter over without the fear of interruption. Your uncle is a very queer old man, but very good at heart, and I think if you could thoroughly understand each other, there would be no difficulty at all between you. Of course, you will both have to give up some personal preferences, but that is always expected in a case of comradeship. For instance, you have set your mind on making the ministry your calling in life, and your uncle does not approve of it ; on the other hand, he is very much prejudiced against religion in general. My advice to both of you would be, for you to give up the study of the gospel, and for Mr. Montgomery to respect your feelings in regard to your duty as a private member of a church, and as time goes on you will be more likely to come into the same way of thinking than if either of you adhered to your own personal views."

"Yes," said Charlie, "we should in that way, as you say, be very likely to have the same views, but

which do you think would be the more apt to lead the other?"

Mr. Raymond did not like this way of putting it, but he was too agreeable to appear to notice the reproof of his companion's remark, and very adroitly turned the subject.

At this moment they reached his door. As he rang the bell, a smile lit up his naturally grave face, and he said, in a rather apologetic tone, "My family do not expect anyone with me, and you must excuse any confusion you may have to encounter." It was well he mentioned it as he did, for at that moment the door was thrown open, and a boy and girl and dog all rushed into his arms at once. "Oh, papa, Paddy is home! Paddy is home!" the children both screamed at once, the dog in the meanwhile trying to drown their voices with his own loud bark. Mr. Raymond pushed and carried the trio into the house, laughing, perhaps, more at the expression on Mr. Montgomery's face than at any joy he might feel at the return of the said "Paddy." As soon, however, as the young people realized that a stranger was present they betook themselves into the back parlor, and Mr. Raymond conducted his friend upstairs and showed him into an elegantly appointed chamber, telling him to make himself as much at home as possible, and hurried away downstairs, just as Charley discovered his own large travelling trunk. He stood for a moment perplexed, but quickly remembered that he had left it standing in the hall at his uncle's house, and had forgotten to order it to be removed, and when

Mr. Raymond had invited him to his home he had probably seen to it that his belongings were sent with him. Without any more speculation, Charley proceeded to dress himself in the fine suit of black he had bought when he decided to come to Denver. He sighed now as he put it on, for he regretted this expenditure, since his present position was so different from what he had anticipated. When he was dressed, however, with a change of clean linen, the effect was so gratifying that he would have been more than human not to have been pleased with his personal appearance. As he went downstairs, his host met him in the hall, and said, with a mischievous twinkle in his eye, "You found everything all right, did you?"

"Yes," said Charley; "I was surprised that you had my trunk sent here, for I confess I had forgotten it myself, and was very glad to get something I needed out of it."

"Well, I thought it would be a little time before we could settle this business of yours, and in the meantime I wanted you near me, and I thought you might perhaps have in your trunk a sermon or two which would prevent your uncle from sleeping if he knew they were in his house."

They both laughed as they entered the parlor, where they found Mrs. Raymond and her two daughters and niece talking gaily on some interesting theme. As Mr. Raymond presented Mr. Montgomery to his wife he noticed what an elegant-looking woman she was, and how proud her husband seemed to be of her.

She was some years younger than he. Her silvery-gray hair was rolled in a high puff above a broad, intellectual forehead. She had a sweet, cheerful expression in her face that won her way to a stranger's heart at once. Her daughters were two beautiful girls in their teens, and the niece, who looked like her aunt, was also a very handsome young lady. Altogether they formed a delightful company. There was no confused silence after the gentlemen entered. The ladies invited Mr. Montgomery into their conversation by asking him which he thought was nicer for a graduating dress, Japanese silk or Swiss muslin. Of course Charley gave his advice in a way that he knew would cause them to laugh at his ignorance of the entire subject. Miss Maud Raymond had graduated the year before and Ethel would graduate this year, so the matter of a suitable dress was of great importance to them. Just here dinner was announced. Mr. Raymond offered his arm to his niece, Charley took Mrs. Raymond, and the girls followed, talking with each other still about the dress. How pleasant it all seemed to him, and how different his legal friend appeared here, in the genial atmosphere of his own home, from what he had supposed him to be when he first saw him sitting in that stiff-backed chair at his uncle's house.

After the meal was over and the ladies had gone back into the parlor, Mr. Raymond asked his guest into the library, that they might talk freely on the subject that brought them together.

"Now," said the lawyer, as soon as they were

seated in the cosy room, "we may as well look at the matter squarely. Your uncle cannot live long. I would not say this to you in this way if I had reason to believe that there was any love between you, but I know you are comparative strangers." Charley knew this, too, and could not take exception to the lawyer's words; still it seemed a cold-blooded transaction to sit there and discuss the old man's length of days; but he bowed assent, and his legal adviser continued. "He has changed his will at least five times. Once it was to a college that he was going to leave his money, and then for some reason he decided to change it, and leave it to endow a public library to be called by his name; then a charity home received his sympathies for a short time, and the document was made in their favor; again, just before you came, he gave a large sum to one of the churches for the purchase of a chime of bells, and intended to leave the same denomination the balance of his wealth. Then he heard that one of the trustees had inquired of his physician how long he was going to live, and, of course, he was mad at once, and changed the will in your favor; and I suppose it will have to be changed again to-morrow, unless you succeed in making friends with him."

Mr. Raymond waited for Charley to speak, but after a few moment's pause he resumed by saying, "He is, of course, a very obstinate old man, and it will take a great deal of thoughtfulness on your part to bring about a reconciliation, after what transpired to-day. What is your plan?"

"I have not formed any plan at all. What has occupied my thoughts most of the time since I left his house, was whether I had better stay here and try to get work or to go directly back."

"Oh, nonsense, nonsense," said his companion, you have no idea how wealthy your uncle is. It is well worth taking a little trouble for; but, as I say, he is peculiar, and will have to be managed carefully. I suppose you thought showing him your independent spirit would bring him to terms, but pardon me if I tell you that I do not think it was exactly the best plan with him, though with some men it would have done."

"Mr. Raymond," said Charley, leaning towards him with a flushed face, "let us thoroughly understand each other before we go any farther. My uncle said plainly that he hated churches and preachers and would have nothing to do with them. And I, for my part, have decided to make the Church my life work, and all he can say or offer will not shake my determination or change my purpose in the least. And as I have reason to believe he will not alter his views any, I cannot see how a reconciliation is going to be brought about."

"You do not pretend to say that you will absolutely throw up all hopes of your uncle's money for the sake of preaching the gospel?" and the lawyer stared at the young man as if he were a natural curiosity.

"I mean that identical thing," said Charley, setting his lips firmly together. There was silence for a few minutes, for this was something new for his lawyer-

ship. Money had been his own aim in life, and though he now possessed many things that money could not buy, still he considered it was one of the most important agencies for the promotion of happiness, and could not understand why anyone in his senses could put so insignificant a thing as religious preference in the way of the vast wealth of which this young man was so nearly in possession.

"There is just one thing that would tempt me to make another appeal to my uncle, and that is if I thought I might be of any use to him. It is a very sad thing to see a man of his age crying out against all forms of religion and churches, when he will be called upon so soon to try their realities. I do not remember my father very plainly, for I was only ten years old when he died, but there was something in the voice and manner of my uncle that reminded me of him, and has saddened me ever since."

"Well," said Mr. Raymond, brightening up at this concession from his companion, "that is just what I said. If you would give up to your uncle's way of thinking, until you got into his good graces, you might be able to do him a great deal of good, and for yourself perhaps find a true friend.

"Yes, I might, as you say, make for myself a good friend and benefactor, and if he would remember me in his will it would be indeed a good thing for me; but I am afraid that leaning toward his views would do me and the cause I represent more harm than his money could balance."

"I don't believe I understand you clearly. I

supposed when you stood up so manfully for religion this afternoon that you did it to test your uncle's love for you, or to make him feel a sort of reverence for your opinion, but now when I hear you weighing his money against your prospects as a preacher it seems to me ludicrous; you must realize that the income from your uncle's estate is more than thrice the amount of any clergyman's salary in this country."

Mr. Raymond arose as he spoke, and thrusting his hands into his pockets strode rapidly up and down the room in a most excited manner. "And," he continued, as he came to a halt in front of this improvident young man, "if after his death you cared to make for yourself a name as a minister or a philanthropist, what an excellent opportunity you would then have."

This last sentence stung Charley into almost uncontrollable anger. "I can see, Mr. Raymond, that you do not understand me yet, if you think for a moment that I have chosen this profession for the sake of popularity. It has been very far from my thoughts; but I can excuse you on the ground that you first made my acquaintance as a fortune-seeker, and I will explain right here that I received your letter at a time when I was smarting under a deep disappointment and was pining for a change. So I gladly caught at the opportunity it offered of putting a number of miles between myself and the existing surroundings. I hope you will give me the credit, at least, of being truthful, when I say to you that I did not give the money a thought, but did feel that I

would perhaps have the comforts of a home. But, how much I regret coming here and losing the place I was in (which, though not very lucrative, was at least independent) God and myself only know." He, too, was standing as he said this to the lawyer, and his fine voice and earnest manner gave an expression of determination to his words that made further argument seem out of the question.

"When I said just now," he continued, "that I might be of some use to my uncle, I had no thought of bringing down my standard of principle, for I think he has seen too much of that, and it has helped to make a sceptic of him. When Christians say in church that the world cannot offer anything to compare with the riches of the Gospel, and the next day sell their birth-right for a mess of pottage, they prove one of two things, that there is no God, or that they have never known him, and are merely repeating what they have heard some one else say."

Mr. Raymond could not but confess to himself that his young friend's place was in the pulpit. But this matter of reconciliation with the uncle was his business, and he must see to it.

So he took his seat again and said, "You are right when you say the poor old man has been made a sceptic by half-hearted Christians. There is a point right here that a great many good people lose sight of, and that is, that the rich see more of the bad side of humanity than they do of the good; they never need charity, and therefore they never get a sight of its beauty.

"If they are treated kindly by anyone it is generally followed by a request for help of some kind, and if they do give anything to the poor or unfortunate it is not received very gratefully, from the fact that the recipient knew that it did not require any self-denial on the part of the donor. How often you hear it said of such gifts, 'Oh! they did not feel it; they could have given twice as much if they had wanted to.' Do you see?" said Mr. Raymond, looking his companion sharply in the face, as if he would compel him to see as he did, "I suppose it is the price that mortal men have to pay for their luck in getting so much of the desired dust."

It seemed now that these two men were better friends since they had shown to each other some of their own convictions of conscience, but they were no nearer an agreement than before they entered the library. Just at this moment Lulu put in her curly golden head and said, in her sweet, baby voice: "The two hours are up, and now you must come and play chess with cousin Blanche; you know you promised, and she is waiting for you."

Mr. Raymond was the father of his family in an instant. The sight of that chubby, dimpled face could drive out of his mind at any time the most intricate legal question. He caught the little girl in his arms and kissed her passionately, and turning to Charley, said proudly, "I tell you, Montgomery, there are things in this hard, old world that are dearer than gold," to which his friend bowed assent as they entered the parlor.

It was a custom in the Raymond household to spend an hour in the latter part of the evening together, and while Mr. Raymond and Miss Blanche played chess, Mr. Montgomery found himself very well entertained by the other members of the family. Little Dick, or "Richard the Second," as his sisters called him, told the guest how Paddy the dog had ran away, and his father had found him down the street and sent him home. And Lulu explained that his name was Padreweska, and they called him Paddy for short, and said he belonged to her uncle who was now dead, and that was why they all loved him so much. They were a pleasant, intelligent family, and as Charley looked at the smooth-faced lawyer, sitting there seemingly so absorbed in that innocent amusement, his wife near him and his children there, all enjoying the peace and blessedness of this delightful home, it occurred to him that here was an incentive to work which many men lacked. Men in this position sometimes soothe their consciences with the thought that if the greed for gain does seem to be a mania with them, the way they are using it, in bringing so much comfort to those dependent on them, is a good excuse for its indulgence.

The next morning as Charley was leaving the dining-room Mr. Raymond said to him, "I have my phaeton at the door, would you like to go for a drive with me? It is a nice morning, and a good time for you to see more of the city."

Charley thanked him, and in a few moments they were moving along the streets behind a swift pair

of handsome chestnut horses. Mr. Raymond himself holding the reins and enjoying the praise that Montgomery was bestowing on the span of well-kept trotters. He was an active, industrious man, and when he went out for pleasure he did not want any one to drive his horses but himself. He had intended when he started out that morning, to have a further talk with Charley concerning his prospects, and if he found him relenting toward his uncle they would then drive around to the old man's residence, and perhaps be able to fix up matters between them without any more delay. Mr. Raymond knew John Montgomery thoroughly (or thought he did), and was convinced that the "giving-in" would have to be on the part of his nephew; so he had taken this drive with the intention of talking over the young man, if possible, to be more amenable to his uncle's views.

They whirled along the avenue, and were just turning off toward the river when Mr. Raymond heard his name called, and stopped his horses by the side of the Rev. Mr. Darlington's vehicle.

"Good morning," said that gentleman to his lawyer friend, "I suppose you have not heard of the distressing news I received from Canada?"

"No; is it anything serious?"

"I had a telegram this morning that my brother was dying, and I must go immediately."

"That is very sad. Is there something I could do for you to help you off, or attend to some of your business here while you are obliged to be away?"

"No, I cannot think of any service you could

render me, though I thank you for the kind offer. I am in a strait, however. You know I am without a colleague at present, and cannot think of anyone that I can get to fill my place in the church to-morrow. I have never left my congregation without providing for them a pastor, and although this is an extreme case, yet I hesitate to close my church. There are a great many strangers in the city, and all of the churches will be well filled. I have no time to see anyone, and I must take the twelve o'clock train to-day. He seemed to be speaking to himself more than to his listeners, not thinking that his friend could be of any use to him in a matter of this kind, and was surprised when Mr. Raymond said, "Perhaps my friend here could assist you, as he is one of your fraternity. Mr. Darlington let me introduce to you Mr. Montgomery." The carriages stood very close together, so the gentlemen shook hands cordially.

"I should deem it a great favor to myself and congregation, Mr. Montgomery, if you would occupy my pulpit to-morrow."

"I am not an ordained minister yet, and am only a student, though, if I can fill your place to-morrow I should be only too glad. As you go away so soon I shall have to trust to our mutual friend here for guidance."

"That is all right," said Mr. Darlington, "I will leave all necessary orders with the sexton, and Mr. Raymond will take you to the church. I shall have to leave you now, as my time is very limited; good-bye, and thank you very much."

While the men were talking the lawyer was thinking, and the result was that he did not say anything to Charley about his uncle that day, but assured him that he and his family would be very glad to entertain him for a few days, especially as he had promised to do so great a favor for their friend and pastor, Mr. Darlington. As Charley sat in his cosy room preparing his sermon for the next day, it came to his mind how fortunate it was that he had provided himself with a new suit of clothes, that he might appear respectable to the fashionable congregation he expected to address the following day; surely there was the hand of God in all his ways.

About an hour before the family were ready for church, Mr. Raymond said to them, "I have to go out for a walk this morning before church time, and I do not think I can be back in time to go with you, but I shall probably be at the church, as I want to hear Mr. Montgomery." The girls pouted and said it was just too mean for anything, but Mrs. Raymond assured them that they would do nicely, as one gentleman in the carriage was sufficient, and laughingly declared that she would sit by Mr. Montgomery herself, just to make them jealous.

The heavy tones of the grand organ were pealing softly as Charley ascended the steps that lead to the pulpit. He knew that the large church was full, and that every eye was on him. The galleries far up in a circle were one mass of faces. He did not look to see this, for there was no need; the flutter of fans, the gentle rustle of silk, the light but firm tread of the

ushers, all told him that this magnificent edifice was filled to repletion with human souls like his own.

As he bowed his head in prayer for a few moments, he asked that to each waiting heart his words might bring a message of peace or warning as they most needed. There was a certain satisfaction to him in the silent prayer he offered before that vast assembly; he wanted them to know where he looked for the words of strength that he intended to give them.

When he turned his face toward the people his mind was so taken up with his subject that he had no thought of who were his listeners. Once he thought of the Raymond's as Lulu's curly head bobbed up in her seat, and at another time in a stream of purple light that came in through the stained glass windows he thought he saw the face of Mr. Raymond, but he was too busy with the temptations of Christ as compared with our own to think of any individual. He had chosen this subject because he knew he could do it justice, having gone through so many temptations. How well he could sympathize with the human side of his blessed Master!

He felt, as his congregation did, that he was at his best. Some would say that it was the bracing Rocky Mountain air, others that the high arched roof made it easy to be heard; but he knew by experience that when God had a great work for him to do, He fitted circumstances to aid him in the completion of that work.

When the family returned and were going in to dinner, Mr. Raymond came home, seemingly in the

best of spirits, and when he congratulated the preacher on his sermon, the latter was much surprised, and said, "I did not know you were there, although I remember thinking I saw you; but the church was so dark that the faces were too indistinct for me to recognize anyone but Lulu, whose yellow curls looked like little dancing stars," and Charley pulled one of the silken ringlets to make her hear what he was saying; whereupon she said promptly, "I think it is naughty for folks to talk about dancing on Sunday."

When they were coming home from the evening service Mr. Raymond said to him, "Is there any danger of a preacher becoming vain?"

"Not unless he is very handsome," said Charley.

"No, but I mean when a large crowd comes out to hear him, so that people stand and many are turned away, as happened to-night, does it not make him vain of his powers?"

"That is a subject I do not study very much. When a farmer has a good crop of corn he is glad, but not vain, for he knows too well who sends the sunshine to make it grow."

Mr. Raymond was silent for a few moments, and then said abruptly, "Did you know that your uncle was at church this morning and heard your sermon?"

"No," said Charley, starting up in his seat, "was he?"

"Yes, he was; and I do not know whether I did right or wrong in taking him. When you promised Mr. Darlington yesterday that you would preach for him, I thought while you were talking that I would

persuade him to go and hear you. So, this morning I went over to his place and, after a good deal of coaxing, he at last got ready and went with me."

"Well," said Charley, when his friend stopped, "what did he say?"

"That is the strangest part of it; he did not say a word all the way back to his house. I said pleasantly, as we got into the carriage, in an off-hand way, 'The lad is pretty smart after all, isn't he?' He mumbled something under his breath and never said another word. When I got out of the carriage at the street corner he said, in an absent-minded way, 'Bring him around to-morrow.' Of course I knew he meant you, and I was glad to hear him say that much; but to-night as I came out of church I met Theodore, and asked him how Mr. Montgomery was, and he said he had kept his bed all day, would not eat nor have the doctor, and so I say I am afraid I did wrong in taking him out this morning. It seems strange for him not to want the doctor, as that is generally the first one he wants to see if he is at all sick."

"We had better go there now, perhaps," said Charley, "before we go to your place."

"No, I guess not. He said I should come to-morrow and bring you with me, and he is always so particular about those little matters."

"You can do as you like, but I feel it my duty to go there to-night. He is an old man, and if anything should happen to him I would never forgive myself for neglecting this opportunity of seeing him, now that he has expressed a willingness to have me come."

"But it would make no difference with you, as his will is made in your favor and he has not had it changed."

"It is not my prospects, but his own that I am thinking of," said Charley, trying to speak calmly, for he knew the lawyer did not intend those personal remarks as an insult, and yet he could scarcely receive them in any other light. He called to the driver to let him out at the next turning, for he was determined to see his uncle that night.

But Mr. Raymond stopped him, saying, "Oh! if you will go, I am going with you, but I give you warning that you may not be allowed to see him to-night, or to-morrow either for that matter, since you will not obey his commands."

"I will take the chances so far as I am concerned, though I do not want to be the cause of any trouble between yourself and him. You have been his friend and counsellor so long."

"Set yourself at rest on that score. I will keep in the background, so that he shall not know that I am here. I am too well acquainted with him to rush uninvited into his presence." This last hint was lost on Charley, who was so intent on trying to do something for the soul's good of this irate old man. They had reached the house now, and were going up the steps when they met Theodore coming out. It was fortunate, and Charley hastened to ask him concerning his uncle's health.

"He is still in bed, very restless, talking to himself all the time. I thought I heard him praying, but as

he never does that, I must have been mistaken. I was just going to tell the doctor how he is and ask his advice. He has not been sent for."

"Then, do not go for the doctor until I have seen him," said Charley eagerly. "I am going in now, and want you to take me to his room."

"Oh," said Theodore, "I could never do that," holding up his hands, "it would be more than my place is worth."

Charley looked helplessly about him. Was everyone so much afraid of this man? Mr. Raymond rather enjoyed the situation, and he thought his obstinate friend would be able to see what kind of man he had to deal with. They were in the hall now, and Charley took from his pocket a card, and wrote on it,

"I want to see you to-night; I go east early in the morning.

"CHARLEY MONTGOMERY."

And handing it to the half-frightened man, he said, a trifle impatiently, "Give him that, and I will abide by his decision."

The man took it and disappeared through the draped doorway.

"I wrote that I wanted to see him to-night, as I was going east in the morning," said Charley, turning to the lawyer, who, he thought, had a right to know all that was said or done on this occasion.

"But you do not intend to go?" said that gentleman, a little testily.

"I certainly do if I cannot see him now. There is no use in my staying here any longer. I may be able to get back the work I laid down when I came here, and it is the best thing I can expect at present."

As Mr. Raymond was going to speak the curtains parted, and the face of Theodore was seen, with his hand beckoning, and in another moment the lawyer was alone in the hall, and seated himself to await further developments.

When Theodore presented himself at the bedside of his master, it was with great trepidation, and he hardly dared speak; but Mr. Montgomery looking up at him, asked what he wanted.

And so of course he had to tell, and knowing that the old man could not read the writing in the dim light with his old eyes, read for him the message, adding in a trembling voice, "He is waiting in the hall."

"Tell him to come," was all the old man said. But it was enough, and he guided his friend through the winding halls and up the cushioned stairs, and brought him to the bedside of his aged relative, where, closing the door carefully, the two men were left alone.

It was a time long to be remembered by them both. As Charley approached the bed whereon the old man was lying there was nothing in his heart but pity for him, who, amid all the grandeur of his surroundings, was alone and friendless.

As the invalid saw the strong, manly figure of the young man near his bedside, there came to him an

overwhelming sense of his own weakness, and he stretched out his trembling hand toward his nephew in a way that showed how much he needed his protection and kindly sympathy.

Charley took the cold, quivering hands between his own warm palms, and said, anxiously, "Are you feeling sick to-night?"

His uncle said in answer, "I have been sick ever since you came. I thought you ought to give up everything if I willed you my money, and I thought you a fool because you wanted to preach; but when I heard you this morning talk of how much Christ had sacrificed for us, and how he was tempted, and had resisted for our sakes, as I sat there I knew you felt every word you said. Oh! my old heart is broken. He added bitterly, "I have spent my whole life getting gold, and now it mocks me. I could not look at the silver on my dinner-table to-day, its glitter seemed like evil faces grinning at me. I would be glad to die, but I know I am not fit to be in the presence of the man Christ that you pictured so plainly to me this morning. I have said and done all in my power all my life against the Church of God, and now I feel that the worst hypocrite whose name is on her books is better prepared for heaven than I am. I could go down on my knees to ask your pardon for what I said to you the other day."

"No, no," said Charley, his voice husky with emotion; "you shall not ask my pardon for anything you said to me, for at the time you were saying it I did not feel it a personal matter; but you will understand

me now when I tell you that anything uttered against the Church that I love so much is like another cruel thorn in the crown of my blessed Lord." He regretted this remark as soon as it had left his lips, for it seemed to cause so much agony of soul to his already heart-broken listener.

But the young man himself was deeply moved by this confession from his uncle, and could not be expected to exercise much self-control on an occasion like this; however, there was a feeling of exultation in his heart to see that the man before him was so deeply penitent, and he hastened in his next words to show him how willing and glad Christ would be to receive him in the contrite spirit he now manifested.

It was nearly an hour since they came together, and they were still holding each other's hands, when Theodore made his appearance and asked if Mr. Raymond's carriage should wait any longer.

John Montgomery said promptly: "No, send it away, we do not want it to-night." And Mr. Raymond knew when Theodore told him what his master said, and how he was holding his nephew's hand and looking into his face, that Charley Montgomery had made no mistake in choosing the Gospel in preference to his uncle's money, for now he was sure of both.



CHAPTER IX.

"SICK, AND YE VISITED ME."



FIVE long years, freighted with joy and sorrow and valuable experience, have passed over the heads of the family at Hill-Crest, and over those of their friends whose hearts and fortunes are connected with them.

Harold and his happy wife and family are living in their beautiful home at Lake View, the family now consisting of a strapping boy and a baby girl, whose blue eyes had only seen the light two short months ago, the care and admiration of their proud parents. When Kathey became mistress of Lake View her first visitors were Geraldine and her mother. They had both felt it very deeply that Kathey had taken the man for her husband whom it seemed to them a richer girl ought to have had ; and if their position in society had been what it once was they would probably have carried their resentment to the point of an actual snub. But, as it was, their best course was one of intimacy with Kathey, who felt very sorry

for her aunt and cousin when they told her how homesick they had been, and how hard it was for them to be ranked with working-people. Of course she remembered that Geraldine had once said that she had rather die than work for a living, and she believed her, but was too kind to mention it now, knowing that life is sweet, and rather to be preferred than death by starvation.

Harold did not tell his wife how much her cousin had done to prevent his ever seeing her, nor how slightly she had always spoken of her to him; but when Kathey said one day that, with his consent, she would offer them a home, he told her he was afraid her kind heart was blinding her eyes. "For," he added, "you cannot help but see they are jealous of you, and you know it is never safe to have in your home a jealous person; for your very kindness to them only serves to nurture the green-eyed monster, and give him more power for an attack." So, accordingly they went their way, working at what they could get to do and doing without what they were not able to earn.

At Hill-Crest there was very little change. Robert McDonell was five years older, but was not much changed in appearance. To his friends his tongue had a little more of the Irish brogue of former days, but he still declared himself as young as ever.

Edith spent a good portion of her time with her sister at Lake View, and could have been mistress of Green Cliffe had she accepted the many offers that Adolphus delighted to give her. I

say the many, for they had become periodical. He declaring that "No" was not an answer to his proposition, and would immediately say (after receiving what to anyone else would have been a final dismissal) that he would come again for an answer, and then go off for another trip or tour of inspection, as he called it. It was well known in the vicinity of Lake View that Edith could at any time call to her side the wealthy Adolphus, for he did not try to conceal his feelings in regard to the matter, and some of her friends thought her very foolish not to accept so good an offer. But when she heard any of those disagreeable hints, she thought of the face of a certain college student which her brother-in-law had painted and hung in his home, and which she often said was his best piece of work; that gentleman felt flattered by the words of praise, and never surmised that it was the subject and not the workmanship that called her so often to look at the handsome portrait.

There was not so much change in Grace as in the other McDonell girls, for she was always contented with what she had, and the last few years being more prosperous than formerly, there were in the home at Hill-Crest many new comforts and even luxuries.

Berthy was less absorbed in study than formerly. She was now learning that it is more noble to put in practice what we do know than to strive unceasingly for knowledge with no particular object in view. Her life was broadening out. There had come to her opportunities to do good to others, which she had gladly accepted. A class of unruly boys in the

Sabbath School had been taken by her, in the spirit of self-forgetful devotion, and the minister praised her for the success she had in subduing their turbulent natures to a fair degree of order. But, as usual, at home there was a misunderstanding. Her own family could not see why, if she wanted to be so good, she could not find more to do in the household, where so many little things needed her care; and she did not realize herself that it was her craving for appreciation and words of praise which she never received at home that made her so willing to work outside.

Here, though she often found much to discourage her efforts, there was always that courteous, respectful treatment which was so satisfactory to her nature and made her so happy.

Her friendship for the Kenyon's had increased as the years had passed, and Rachel and herself had become more to each other than they could themselves demonstrate. Mrs. Kenyon had in the last two years failed in health very rapidly; her daughter had begged her to have a consultation of doctors, other than those living in Summerville, but the peaceful, quiet woman dreaded to alarm her daughter by having physicians who would tell her what the real cause of her sickness was, and believing herself that there was no cure for her complaint, she did not want to disclose to her affectionate daughter that a creeping but almost painless cancer was eating her life away. But, as the beautiful fall weather came on and she did not get any better Rachel would not be silent any longer, but went

to the family physician herself, and said: "I must have another doctor, unless you can do my mother more good than you are now doing."

"Miss Kenyon, there is only one thing that will save your mother's life, and I am afraid that it is too late for that; I mean an operation."

"For what?" said Rachel, staring at him like one in a dream.

"For the cancer that she has had for a"—but he did not finish the sentence, for the girl lay prone at his feet. "Oh, oh," said the little man, "I did not realize what I was saying."

After he brought her back to consciousness he told her tenderly that he himself had been trying to persuade her mother to submit to an operation; and added, that if she could be taken to a good private hospital she would have better care and would be more likely to rally from the shock, which would be attended by the most danger.

Rachel knew the very place, near their old home in Philadelphia, and when she mentioned the name it so pleased the doctor that she seemed herself quite encouraged. When she bade him good-bye they had both decided that her mother must go the following week, as every day they delayed but lessened her chance for recovery.

When Rachel told her mother what the doctor had said, and what she so much desired her to do, and the girl seemed so confident of success, she said, in her own quiet way: "Well, if thee thinks best I will go. I want to be buried in the cemetery by my

loved ones, and I will be there if the operation does not prove successful." She was looking out of the window, through the branches of the waving willow tree as she spoke, and did not see the anguish on her daughter's face that her words were causing, until a low cry made her turn and realize how terrible a thing it would be to this lonely girl for her mother to die.

"Do not weep, my darling. Forgive me for saying this to thee to hurt thy feelings. It is selfish of me I know to want to go and leave thee, but I have been parted so long from thy father and the babes that it seems to me that I am counting the days until I see them again, and when I think of being with Christ, and seeing Him face to face, when I have felt His presence near me so many times, it is such rapture, that I find myself saying, 'Oh, that I had the wings of a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest.'" Her arms were around her daughter as she spoke, her face was lifted up, and a glow was on every feature that seemed to come from the very skies. It was hard to mourn for such as she. The gaunt spectre of death does not seem to have anything to do with their departing souls, and Rachel felt that she herself was the selfish one for wanting to keep her dear mother here, within the very sight of the heavenly home.

It was a great shock to Berthy when she heard the true cause of Mrs. Kenyon's sickness, but her young, hopeful nature thought her life might be spared, and urged Rachel to take her at once to Philadelphia, that she might receive the treatment and cure that they thought would spare to them, for a few years at least,

the life of one so dearly loved, for it was hard to tell which of the girls had the greater claim on the affection of the motherly Quakeress. Berthy felt that but for her kind, restraining hand she would never have found for her soul the strength and comfort of a religious experience, and the Christian saint knew that she was wielding an influence for good on the passionate, wilful girl that she herself could not realize; and then, too, there was room in her heart for more than her own beloved daughter and she had taken in the poor, misunderstood child, and felt thankful that God had given her this work to do for His sake.

In a week from the day that Rachel had called on the doctor all the arrangements were made, and they were ready to start for the great city that would hold for them the balance of life and death.

The school that Rachel had taught so acceptably for more than four years (and out of the salary received she had laid by the sum that would now pay their expenses in the months to come) had been provided with another teacher. The little cottage was closed and the canary bird and Maltese cat were taken by Berthy to her home, to be cared for until they returned.

It seemed very lonely at Hill-Crest whenever Berthy thought of or looked toward the empty home of Ray Kenyon and her mother.

She had promised to look after everything about the house, and many times she went there alone, unlocked the door, and sat for a while in the chair that they had said so many times was hers, read from Rachel's books, and brushed the dust off the furniture,

and once or twice had written a letter to her friend on her own writing desk, saying in it, "I can almost see you moving around the house, everything is so natural." She was hoping to hear good news all the time, and the first two or three letters were full of encouragement, but there came a time when she did not receive any word for a week, and she wrote and did not get an answer. But one morning a letter, blurred and blotted, told her that Rachel's mother was fast sinking, and the doctors gave her no hope, and added, "I wish you were with me." About a week before this letter came Berthy had received nineteen gold dollars as a birthday present from Harold and Kathey, saying it was one for each year of her life. She knew they had put it in this way so that she would not feel offended because they had given her money, instead of something else. How much more pleased she would have been with some article that they had chosen to suit her taste, showing that they had studied her wishes. They had brought Grace on her birthday a pretty blue silk dress, and Kathey had said, when she thanked her for it: "We knew you would be delighted with it, for you were always fond of blue, and you never have had a silk dress; now, have it made to suit you and it will be lovely."

Berthy rejoiced with her sister and thought of her own birthday so close at hand, and wondered what they would bring her. But when the day came and she got a letter and a little box containing the gold, she was sadly disappointed. The letter said: "We did not know what you would like to have." "Why did

they not know? There are many things I love : one of Harold's little rustic landscapes, or a book." Then when she thought of it, it seemed queer that none of her family had ever given her a book, and they all knew that she loved books so much. But they had sent her a present, and she would not appear ungrateful, so she took the little box containing the money and showed it to her father and the rest of the family, and tried to seem interested.

Edith advised her to buy a nice silk dress ; her father told her to put it in the bank, and Grace said : "I know what you will buy with it, you will spend it all for books."

"Yes," said Aunt Elizabeth, "and not comb her hair or change her dress until they are all read through."

And so her present brought her more sorrow than joy, and when she laid it away it was with the feeling that she never wanted to see the hateful gold again. But, now as she sat crying with Ray Kenyon's letter in her hand, she remembered that the money would take her to Philadelphia, and she would be able to see Mrs Kenyon before she died, and be near Ray to comfort her. When she mentioned her intention to the rest of the family they thought her crazy to go off there. Why, the Kenyon's were no relations of theirs ; what in the world did she want to go there for? Of course they knew she had the money ; but, as Grace said, it would take all that to buy her a tea-gown to wear in the sick room and a suitable dinner dress to appear at the table in the boarding-house. And Aunt Elizabeth said, "Oh, she doesn't care how she looks."

But the father stopped them by saying, "She can go if she wants to: Berthy is not like the rest of you, and there is no use in contradicting her all the time and making her and yourselves trouble."

So the next morning, without any extra preparation, Berthy set off to see her friends and stay by them in their deep affliction.

Rachel did not think when she said in her letter that she would like to have her there that Berthy would come, but when on the evening of the next day she was greeted by her friend her heart was filled with thankfulness.

She had come straight to the private hospital, which she found to be a large house with everything so quiet and homelike that she felt comfortable at once, and proceeded to make herself as useful as possible. She told the matron why she came, and said, "If I can help nurse Mrs. Kenyon I shall be glad, as she has been a mother to me ever since I have known her."

To this the woman replied, "We need more nurses than we have and will gladly find you work to do." At the end of a week Berthy had proven herself such good help, and as Mrs. Kenyon did not need all of the girl's time, she was asked to put on the grey dress and white cap of the institution and go into the adjoining room and wait on a young man dying with consumption, telling her that the nurse's dress kept the sick ones from asking questions, as they would be likely to do if she wore her own clothes.

As she dressed herself in that prim costume she

smiled, thinking how it contrasted with the outfit Grace thought it necessary for her to have. She knew now she could stay as long as Mrs. Kenyon lived, and be near Rachel when the end came.

Poor Ray ! Those were sad days for her, waiting for the visit of the death angel. Her mother never said a word to her about dying after the talk they had in their own home, but she knew that her mother had no thought or desire to get well. Rachel read to her and watched by her in the night when she seemed to be sleeping sweetly, and tried to feel, as she knew her mother did, that it was God's will that she should go home first.

Once she had asked her daughter to sing to her, but Rachel could not keep her voice steady, and so she had not asked her again. The next morning after Berthy had taken charge of the young man as his nurse, he said to her: "I expect a friend of mine to-day. He comes every Thursday and stays all the afternoon with me. The other nurse used to take that time to rest or go out, for we like to be alone, you know ; he is a good hand to give medicine, and then he is such a nice singer all of the patients like to hear him. He has been out of town for four weeks, but he is home again now, and will be here to-day."

"I will be glad," said Berthy, "to spend my time in Mrs. Kenyon's room. It is the next to yours, and I suppose I can hear your friend sing to you when he comes."

So she got everything ready for the use of the young man's friend, and when she heard him coming

up the stairs she slipped into the next room and prepared to spend a quiet afternoon with her friends. Mrs. Kenyon seemed better than usual to-day and was inclined to talk a little.

The girls would sometimes borrow hope when those days came to her, but they were generally followed by several days of extreme lassitude, and then they thought they would never be deceived again. But now they were building hope on the same shaky foundation, and really became quite cheerful themselves when they saw the invalid in such good spirits. They were talking on some interesting subject when their attention was called from what they were saying by the sound from the next room of a soft, tenor voice singing the old familiar hymn, "Abide with Me." They listened as the comforting words were so distinctly heard. Mrs. Kenyon clasped her hands and closed her eyes and seemed to be drinking in all of its loveliness; as the last verse was sung,

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day,
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away,
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life and death, O Lord, abide with me !

she drew a long quivering sigh, not of sorrow but of ecstasy. Then followed other hymns, sometimes all the words would be sung, but often one verse only. As the singer began the first verse of Bethany, Rachel leaned toward her friend and said, in a low voice: "Whose voice is that like? It is just the way he used to speak the words." Berthy knew whom she meant,

but did not speak. As the hymn was finished Mrs. Kenyon opened her eyes and asked who it was that was singing, and Berthy told her all she knew about it.

There was a longer pause and the sick woman seemed impatient to have it begin again. "Berthy," she said, "will thee ask that young man to come in here and sing to me? There are some hymns that I think of that he has not sung, and I want to hear them."

Rachel's cheeks were flushed and her eyes were sparkling like diamonds. "Yes, go," she said, and Berthy went.

As she closed the door behind her and stepped into the other room, her felt slippers made no noise on the floor, and she had time to look at the occupant of the chamber before he was aware of her presence. Standing at the window measuring out a dose of medicine was a tall, broad-shouldered, light-complexioned young man, older than Berthy had expected to see, for the sick boy, who was scarcely eighteen, had called him his friend; but this man must have been twenty-five, for a heavy blonde moustache completely covered his mouth and part of his chin. His profile was all that could be seen as he was standing between the window and the door, and now he turned to the bed to administer the dose that he had prepared, he raised the sick boy up carefully, holding his head against his broad breast, until a coughing spell had passed away, and then gave him the medicine, with the remark, "Now, you are all right, old man." Berthy recognized the voice in an instant, and as he turned away from

the bed and faced her it proved to be, as she expected, none other than her cousin, Roger McDonell. He was perhaps more surprised to see her in a nurse's garb than she was to find him dealing out medicine and singing in a hospital; but he had more presence of mind than she had, and, after shaking hands with her, said to the sick boy, "This is my cousin, I have not seen her for five years; we will take a walk on the balcony, and will come in again soon," and not giving her time to speak, drew her hand through his arm and stepped out on the verandah.

"Now," said he as they were alone, "I want to ask what brought you here in this dress; is it necessity, or only a fad?"

It sounded so like the Roger of old, to have him saying this to her, she laughed at his look of surprise, but when she stopped to explain why she was here there was no thought of merriment for either of them. She told her story as briefly as possible, and added that Mrs. Kenyon had sent her in to ask him to come and sing to her.

"And she did not know who I was, and Ray is here with her mother?" he said, speaking as to himself, "Berthy," and he turned a white, agitated face to his cousin, "I cannot go in there until they know who it is they have asked to come. Go and tell them and I will await your return here. I never expected to see Ray Kenyon again when I left Summerville."

Berthy did not make him any answer, but went into Mrs. Kenyon's room, and told her who it was

that had charmed them with his sweet voice, and waited for further orders. Rachel was out of the room and Mrs. Kenyon said simply, "It seems strange that he should be here at this time, but his songs were for Christ," and she paused a moment, and then said, "tell him I want him to come in and see me."

It seemed an age to Roger before Berthy came back; he paced up and down the balcony, not daring to hope and yet wishing every moment that he might be permitted to speak for himself words that he felt would exonerate him in the eyes of his quaker friend at least, if not those of her daughter. His cousin touched him on the arm and told him to come, and together they went into the adjoining room.

Mrs. Kenyon stretched out her hand to him, and said, in a voice full of hidden meaning, "I was sick, and ye visited me." Roger could not reply, but pressed the white hand he held to his lips tenderly and reverently. She saw that he was deeply moved, and liked him better for the feeling he manifested. Rachel thought his emotion was due to a feeling of grief at the sight of her mother's sickness. When he greeted her she could not restrain her tears, and turning away she buried her face on the shoulder of the faithful Berthy, and wept bitterly. It was a sad meeting for them all. Many times Roger had thought of these kind friends; he was so young and light-hearted when he first knew them, and he had gone through so much since

then of bitter experience. He knew he had profited by the lesson his youthful folly had taught him, but down deep in his heart were the wounds unhealed, and though he valued more the soothing balm of friendship on that sore place, yet it was always tender to the sharp stabs of unkind or unthinking thrusts of sarcasm. He did not know now how far Mrs. Kenyon intended to trust him. She had invited him to-day into the company of her daughter, but he could not take advantage of the whim of an invalid to further his own wishes. He realized as he sat there that his boyish love for this girl had grown with his growth, although five years had elapsed since they last met, and now when he had found her again he did not think he was worthy to so much as look at her pure loveliness. He was too honorable to attempt to renew her acquaintance until she knew him as he now was, and yet he shrank from the thought of her knowing of that dreadful night in Summerville jail.

There was no singing that afternoon, but when he was going away Mrs. Kenyon made him promise to come again soon. He promised her, but added, "I cannot neglect the boy in the other room, for he is all alone in the world, and the doctor says he cannot live the week out." The next afternoon saw him back at the hospital again; he could not stay away now.

Arthur Wade did not expect him so he went directly to Mrs. Kenyon's room. One of the hired

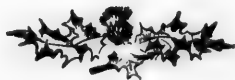
nurses was with her. They had persuaded Rachel to go and lie down as she had been up so much the night before. Mrs. Kenyon had been very tired all the morning, but felt a little stronger now, and was glad to see her young friend again. When he was seated by her bed side, she said to the nurse, "Thee can go away and rest. I will send for thee when Roger goes home."

As soon as they were alone she looked at him and said, "I can see there is a change in thee, tell me how it came about."

Roger was glad she asked the question, and proceeded at once to thank her for the part she had taken in securing his release and also told her how he had wrestled with himself and had come off conqueror. Then he told her of the money that Berthy had sent him, adding that he thought when he opened the little package and found the same ten dollar bank note that he had given her, that she meant it as a reminder that she never wanted to see him again, because of his disgrace. He went on rapidly to relate all his adventures, how he tried to get work, and how he had failed many times, until at last he got a situation unpacking boxes in a wholesale store, and the proprietor found out that he was well educated and was trying to live a Christian life among the rough men and boys he was working with, and he had sent him ¹ to keep books in a branch store. "After that," continued Roger, "I got right along. I am leader now in the church choir, and I have lots of friends among the boys.

We hold a mission meeting every Sunday afternoon. It was at one of these that I became acquainted with Arthur, who is sick in there, and when I found out he had no friends, I tell you I knew how to pity him; and so I got him in here, and we fellows chip in and pay his way."

Mrs. Kenyon would have corrected anyone else for using these slang phrases in her presence, but in Roger she seemed to think there was nothing to blame. She saw a very great improvement in his speech and manner, so she could afford to wait until his own good sense taught him better words to use. While they were talking Rachel came into the room. Her quick blush on seeing who was there told her mother very plainly that the old preference for this young man had not entirely died out, and some look or manner conveyed to Roger evidently the same idea, for he prolonged his stay and looked so jubilant when he went away that a casual observer would have thought he had been attending a wedding reception instead of calling on the sick.



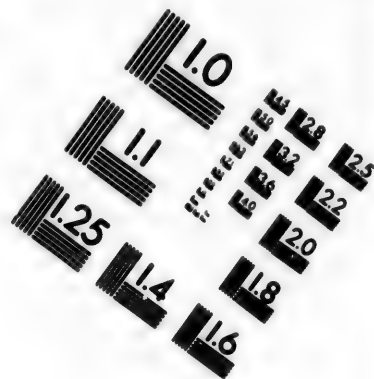
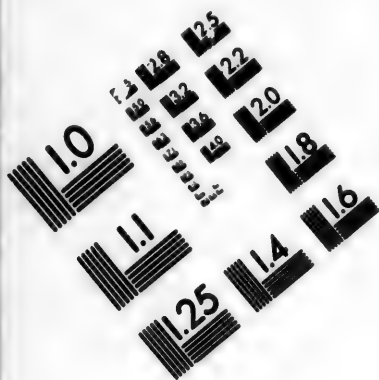
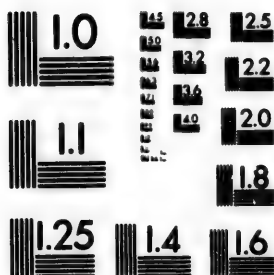


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CHAPTER X.

ROBERT M'DONELL'S STORY.



HERE is a gentleman in the parlor asking to see father, said Grace McDonell one morning to Edith, as that young lady was trying to teach her little nephew to read. "Will you go in? I am so busy I cannot sit there until father comes, and it would not look well to leave a stranger alone."

So Edith arose to go, but Master Harry did not like to be left in this unceremonious manner, and boldly declared his intention of going also. Accordingly he went, but when he got inside the door his boldness forsook him somewhat, and he clung bashfully to his aunt's dress skirt.

Sitting with his back to the light Edith saw, as she thought, a perfect stranger, and said by way of apology for coming in, "You were waiting to see Mr. McDonell, were you not?"

"Yes," said the gentleman, rising and advancing a few steps towards her, "I received a letter from him,

and came to see him as he requested." The boy hanging to her hand, made Edith feel a little embarrassed, and she had not looked the caller in the face, but when she heard the clear, strong voice she knew so well, she looked up quickly and met the dark, earnest eyes of her old friend, Mr. Montgomery. He did not offer her his hand until she gave him hers, and then he did not seem particularly glad to see her. But she was glad to see him, and begging him to be seated, took a chair herself, with Harry still by her side, and said cordially, "I did not know you were in Summerville. When did you come?"

"Last night," he said shortly, and there was silence.

"You have been living in Denver, we heard."

"Yes, I have lived there since I went from here, five years ago."

"You like the West better than you do this part of the country?" And Edith glanced at him shyly, thinking how handsome he had grown, and wondering, with a little heartache, if he was married.

"Yes, I like the West very much."

He was thinking how little change there had been in Edith. He had expected to see her looking well, for he thought as Harold's wife her life would be all sunshine, but he was not prepared to see this young, girlish wife of five years, and, of course, that must be her boy. How much he looked like Harold, and how proud the father must be of him.

The silence grew oppressive, and Edith made one more attempt to converse with her companion.

"You have not seen Harold since you came, have

you? This is his boy, do you think he looks like him?"

To this long sentence he replied, "No, I have not seen him; is he in Summerville?"

"Yes, he and Kathey came yesterday. They are in the dining-room; I will call him." And in a few moments Harold came into the parlor.

Charley did not know whether he was glad or sorry to see his friend; he had never answered his last letter, and when he had written and congratulated him on his marriage, it had only been a few lines, nothing like the long letters they had always exchanged. But now, as he saw him coming leisurely through the doorway, all his old love for him returned in an instant, and following his first impulse he grasped him by the hand, to the surprise of Harold, saying, "How are you," before that gentleman could think who was greeting him so warmly.

"Well, if this is not a genuine surprise party I would like to know what it is."

"You are evidently the surprised party, for your wife told me you were here, so I am not surprised."

Just then Kathey came into the room, and Harold said, "You have met my wife, you say?"

But Charley was a little mixed, as the boy ran to his mother and said, "Oh, mamma, who is dat man papa is so glad to see."

"I do not believe I have," said the perplexed preacher, getting very red in the face, and feeling that he had got turned around somehow; but his confusion passed unnoticed.

Mrs. Huntington said very sweetly: "I have heard my husband speak of you so often that I seem to know you very well. I do not remember you when you were staying at Mr. Howell's here in the village, but my sister met you, I believe."

He was soon at ease chatting with Harold and the ladies. They were all talking at once, as friends long parted do, when Mr. McDonell made his appearance.

"Father, this is Mr. Montgomery; he has called to see you," said Edith.

As the old man took the hand of the younger he was trembling visibly, and his face was very pale.

"You are the son of Charles Montgomery, are you? I need not ask, for you are exactly like him."

"Did you know my father so well?" asked Charley eagerly, not answering the first question.

"Know him? Do I know myself? There was never a man I knew better; we crossed the ocean together, and together faced the hardships of a new country. I did not feel I could give up to you what he had entrusted to my care until I saw you and made sure you were enough like him to do the right thing."

Harold arose and said to his wife and Edith, "We will leave them alone."

"No," said Mr. McDonell, "you may as well all know what it is that brings this young man here. Sit down; it is not a very long story," and he went to the door and called Grace. "I want them all to hear what I have got to say." When they were all seated, he continued: "I and Charles Montgomery came to this country together all alone, and we managed to keep

as close to each other as possible until he was married. The little farm he got with his wife was in the State of Pennsylvania. I came here, and we were parted for the first time, but we kept up a correspondence, and once in a while we visited each other. He married a Quaker preacher's daughter, whose name was Rachel Peabody. She was a little pale, sickly woman, but as good as gold." Charley listened eagerly to these words of praise of his sainted mother. "It is nineteen years ago last month since I and my wife went to pay a visit to Charles Montgomery. We had not heard from him for quite a while, and thought to surprise them. When we got there we found the little woman very sick, with a baby girl only a few days old. Well, we got there on Wednesday, and on Sunday night she died, leaving her baby and her older boy. That boy was you," he said, looking at Charley. "The question was, Who would take the baby? Poor Monty, as I always called him, was nearly crazy; his love for his wife was more like worship than anything else, and now she was gone he did not know what to do. Then my wife said to me, 'Bob, let us take the baby. He will be better satisfied to give it to us than to anyone else, and he has the boy to look after.' My wife was kind-hearted, the tears were streaming down her cheeks when she said this, for she thought of the little mother's regrets at leaving the baby, and she had promised her she would see that the child should be well taken care of. So, you see, she thought it her duty to take the child. There is only one thing,

I said, that prevents me from taking her, and that is the talk of the neighbors at home, who will say we had enough of our own without adopting another. 'Oh,' said she, 'we will fix that, let us go to my brother's and stay a while longer, and when we go home, we will tell the folks it is my own, and so it is, for the dying woman gave it to me.' Thus it was arranged, and in less than a year your father was killed by being thrown from a horse, and was buried before I heard of it. A farmer, I believe, took the little farm, and was to keep the boy until he came of age."

"That is the old scoundrel that would not let you go to school," broke in Harold, but Charley cast a look of reproach on him, and Mr. McDonell continued, "I never heard of you until three weeks ago, when I read in the paper that the Rev. Charles Montgomery wanted to know of the whereabouts of his sister, and I answered the advertisement, not letting anyone of my family know anything about it. Of course, I had some faith in the reverend that was to your name, but still I wanted to see you, for your father's sake."

The girls were waiting in breathless suspense to hear what had become of the sister their guest had been searching so long for, and listened intently to the next words of their father, "Oh," he said, suddenly, as if remembering something, "I did get a letter that I supposed to be from you. About five years ago I got five hundred dollars and a letter that said it was from some one that owed me a debt of gratitude."

"It was not from me," said Charley.

"Then, I do not know who sent it, unless it was the farmer, as he had all of the property that your father left."

Harold seemed a little uneasy when the money was first mentioned, though, if the credit of it would be given to his friend Charley, he could keep silent, but to have that rascally old farmer pose as a man who would give back to the orphan daughter of Charles Montgomery the rightful share of her father's property, and to hear him praised for the magnanimous deed, was too much; he could not stand it, and said abruptly, "Do not worry about that money, the man that sent it to you owed you another debt of gratitude, very different from the one you are thinking of." And all of the company knew in an instant where the money came from.

Mr. McDonell was confused for a moment, but seeing the look of intense interest on all their faces, said, "I suppose you are anxious to know where the girl is now? Well, she is in Philadelphia, visiting a sick friend."

"Berthy, Berthy," burst from the lips of all the family at once, and when the father bowed his head in assent, there was a hush for at least three minutes.

"I am disappointed at not finding her here now," said Charley, a little surprised at the consternation the girls seemed to manifest at the thought that this girl was his sister. There was nothing said in reply, until he said again, "When do you expect her home?"

"When is she coming," said Mr. McDonell, turning to Edith.

"We do not know exactly. The woman she went to see is very sick in a hospital, and when Berthy wrote, she said she would stay until the end, and, of course, the end meant her death."

"In a hospital," said Charley, "is she acting as a nurse?"

They knew so little about it, that none of them attempted to answer his eager question.

Finally Mrs. Huntington tried to explain the situation, seeing the embarrassment of the others, but could not throw much light on the subject, and Mr. McDonell only complicated matters by saying, in a tremulous tone of voice, "I have done the best I could for the girl, but she was never like my own, always different." Charley did not say anything more concerning her, but asked for the address of the place where she was staying, and declared his intention of going there immediately, to which there was no reply. He thought there was something wrong. When he listened to his old friend's story of his adopting the little girl, he thanked God in his heart that she had been allowed the companionship of this refined family, and but for the close resemblance of Grace to her father, he might have thought her the one he was looking for, but now he learned that his sister was away in a large city, all alone, with strangers in a hospital. They did not know what position she occupied, for in giving him her address, Edith had said, "I do not think she is board-

ing out of the institution, but I do not know; you will find the Kenyons there, and they will know all about her."

As he was taking his departure Harold said to him, "Mr. McDonell feels sorry that you should not find your sister here when you came. He said they did not want her to go, but she had taken such a liking to that Kenyon girl and wanted to be with her, he had finally given his consent."

"But that is four weeks ago, and, as I understand it, she cannot stay in the hospital, and they do not know where she is boarding, and then there is such an air of mystery about the whole thing I am filled with apprehension."

"O!" said Harold, seeing his friend's look of concern, "She is all right. I guess those people she is with are nice, respectable folks."

"You guess? Then you do not know them?" The expression of disdain and contempt in his voice was like a sharp blow, and Harold recoiled as if he had, indeed, been struck.

"Well, as Mr. McDonell says, she is not like the other girls, and I suppose she would have her own way."

"I will find out by to-morrow at this time where she is and what she is like. Poor, little sister! her path, too, has been rough to her feet." There were tears in Harold's eyes as he bade his friend good-bye, but he could not think of any words of comfort.

After Mr. Montgomery was gone there was a great deal of speculation concerning his first impression of

Berthy. Grace declared that if she had taken her advice and got some good clothes she would present quite a nice appearance before her new brother. But Edith said: "You forget that if she had got the clothes she would not have gone at all, for it would have taken all her money." The father shook his head and seemed sad. Only Kathey said there was nothing to regret, they had done all they could for the girl they had supposed to be their sister.

It was with a heavy heart that Charley Montgomery turned his face toward the city of "Brotherly Love." Late in the afternoon he took his seat in the train. He could have waited until morning, but when he was alone and had time to think he became so restless that he thought it would be better for him to keep in motion. He was sorry now that he had not been more considerate when at the home of his father's friend, who had done so much for his friendless sister.

But why did they all act so queer when they found out that he was her brother, and acknowledged themselves that they were scarcely at all acquainted with the people they had let her go to visit, not one of them being sure what disease the woman was dying with. Berthy was only nineteen years old and, brought up in that select household, would have very little experience and certainly no clear views as to the propriety of forming new friends. It was a problem that he could not solve, and it only increased his desire to see and judge for himself. He could not be blamed for not looking after her earlier, for he

had heard for the first time to-day that his father had left something for his children. The Mr. Brooks that he lived with had always made him feel that the home he had with him was one of charity; and when the little boy ran away he said to himself, "The first money I earn I will send to pay him for taking care of me." But as he grew older and understood better the value of labor, he knew that the close-fisted old man had made enough out of him to pay for all he had ever given him. Through the years that he had been trying to support himself and get the education that was as necessary to his existence as the air he breathed, he could not spare the time or money to make the search that was required. During the five years that he had been in Denver his thoughts had been almost constantly with his sister, who, he felt, had just as good a right as he had to the advantages and luxuries he was enjoying; but whenever the subject was mentioned to his uncle the old man would say, "Oh! Charley, don't bring a girl here, for we are happier by ourselves. I will soon be gone, and then you can find her and make a great lady of her if you wish to." And so it went on until a year before, when John Montgomery died.

The first work Charley began after his uncle's death, although now a regularly ordained minister with a large church on his hands, and with all the work and anxiety that the position implies, was to consult his lawyer in regard to the best method of finding his sister. Richard Raymond did not attempt to advise him to leave the girl alone and keep

for himself her share of his uncle's money. He knew him well enough now to know that such advice would be thrown away, and he advised his friend that the best course would be to advertise in the State and county papers where his father lived and died. So it came about, after a year's advertising, that Mr. McDonell had seen the name in a paper, and had sent an answer with the result above recorded.

As the train neared the great city and the night began to give place to dawn there was scarcely a person awake in the compartment that Charley occupied. He took from his pocket the address of the hospital, and reading it again, put it back. He could not think of anything wilfully wrong in the life or inclinations of this sister he had so longed to see, and he remembered how glad he was to find that the McDonell's knew about her. All the way from his home to theirs he had pictured to his mind a refined, graceful young lady, who would be a joy to him, and he could be to her what he thought every woman was entitled to, a natural protector. It never occurred to him that his sister could have unsatisfied ambitions like his own. If he had found her in the McDonell home with a dainty piece of crochet in her hand and a neat morning costume like he had seen Edith wearing, there would never have entered his masculine heart a bit of sympathy for her, but he would almost have envied her the peaceful life she had lived while he was battling through a selfish world for the education and privileges he felt *his* due. He leaned back in his seat and, with closed eyes, waited for the end of the journey.

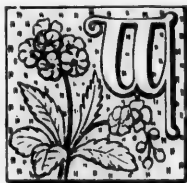
They had been running very fast all night. This suited the impatient traveller, but now as his stopping place was so close at hand he listened eagerly to hear if there was any slacking of speed. He never remembered what he thought just then, for a great clash and roar made him start up, and a whizzing sound as of escaping steam—then all was a blank.





CHAPTER XI.

“SEARCHING FOR SILVER AND FINDING GOLD.”



WHEN Charley Montgomery again tried to open his eyes he found that a thick bandage was tied very tightly over them, and the hand he raised to remove it was taken gently by a soft one and held down, so that he could not move it again; and when he would have raised his left hand he discovered that the pain caused by the movement was so severe that he was compelled to groan aloud.

“Where am I and what is the matter?” he asked, feeling that the owner of the soft hand was somewhere within sound of his voice.

“You have been very sick and are in the home of kind Friends, who will take care of you until you get well. Now, do not talk or try to move, for your arm and head have been hurt, and you will get well more quickly if you keep quiet.”

There was only one thing for him to do, and that was to obey, and so he lay still for a few minutes. A drowsy feeling came over him and he slept until he

was awakened by some one talking near him. He recognized the voice as the one he had heard before, but the other was strange to him; it was a low, girlish tone that said, "You know in novels the young men always fall in love with their nurses."

"Perhaps this one will as his eyes are bandaged so he cannot see her," said the voice he remembered so well, and then they both laughed in a smothered tone, as if holding something over their mouths.

"Come, let us sit by the window, he is sleeping, and I can watch him from there." And Charley could hear all they said though some distance off. "The doctor says he can sit up and have his eyes unbandaged to-morrow, if I can keep him quiet to-day. It is a week yesterday since he was brought here, and if he sits up to-morrow in another week he will be able to go away."

"Will you be glad or sorry to have him go?"

"Oh! I don't know, I suppose he will be glad to see that sister he is talking about all the time. The doctor said it was probably something he had on his mind that kept him delirious so long."

"Why, what did he say about her?"

"He kept saying 'I will find her and take her home with me,' and then he would start up and say 'You have got to tell me all about her.' And again he would say so pitifully, 'Poor, little sister! I will take care of you.' Yesterday he tried to sing the doxology, and this morning he said 'Let us all unite in prayer.'"

"Perhaps he is a preacher, or travelling evangelist,"

said the other; "but, what can he mean by talking about his sister?"

"I do not know, unless it is some one that has run away, and he is looking for her."

"It does not seem to me that I would want to run away from such a brother as he."

Said the nurse, "How strange it must seem to have a brother, I often thought I would like to have one."

"That is another one of your aspirations, is it? You are always wishing for something you cannot have, and now you have thought of something that is an utter impossibility." And they both laughed again.

And the nurse said again, "I have not done so much wishing since I came here, have I? To tell the truth, I am happier than I ever was in my life."

"Well, you are a strange girl, if waiting on the sick makes you happy," said the other.

And the nurse spoke again and said, "Do not misunderstand me, please. I do not think nursing my vocation, but it is better than housework and the hum-drum existence I have always led."

Charley thought just here that he was eaves-dropping, and so made a move to let his nurse know he was awake.

She came to the bed immediately, and raising up his head gave him a dose of bitter medicine, and then shook up his pillows in a tender motherly way, and laid him down again. It was a novelty to lie here and be waited on by a woman he had never seen. The visitor went out of the room, and he could feel

the soft cool hand of his nurse on his forehead, and the breath of a gently swayed fan on his fevered face. So he spoke in spite of the orders he had received, and begged for a drink. He was not very thirsty, but he wanted to let his attendant know that he had returned to consciousness, and perhaps he did enjoy being waited upon by the unseen presence at his bed side. A cool refreshing glass of water was brought in, and while drinking it a step was heard, and a low, but distinct voice said close to him, "Oh! I see he is better," and his wrist was grasped by the unmistakable touch of a doctor's hand. "Yes, yes, much better."

"Well, my friend," speaking to the patient, "how do you find yourself to-day?"

"It is *where* I find myself that puzzles me most."

"Ha, Ha?" laughed the doctor, in a voice he would not have allowed anyone else to use in a room occupied by the sick. "That is what you are thinking about is it? Then your nurse has not enlightened you. Well you were one of those unfortunate ones in the late railway accident, and had a cut between your eyes and an arm broken. We could not find any address about you, only a little slip of paper, on which was written the name of this hospital. I said when I found it, 'here is a young man that has provided for his own entertainment, but when you were brought here none of the people knew anything about you, but they very kindly allowed you to stay. And this young lady has taken such good care of you, that you are much better to-day than I expected to find you at the end of another week.'"

"Is it necessary for me to keep this bandage over my eyes any longer?" said Charley, remembering the girl's words concerning its removal.

"Now you speak of it, I did intend to take it off to-morrow, but as you are so much better, I believe I will try the effect of a dim light. Close the blinds, please, miss," said the doctor, and he proceeded to untie and unpin the troublesome bandages. "There," he said, as the large black eyes opened and looked him full in the face, "I guess you will not want that on again," handing the folded napkin to the nurse. "Now, bring me a bowl of water and towel, hold it please on this side," motioning her to a place close to him. "I will not trouble you long," and he proceeded to wash the wound on the pale forehead. While the practised hand of the doctor was thus performing its duty, the newly opened eyes were looking at the girl holding the bowl. What he saw was a small, dark face with a pair of earnest brown eyes, full of sympathy and anxiety. The white cap above the black hair added to the raven hue of the latter. Her figure was small and plump, and fitted by the plain grey dress, with its tight sleeves, showed only the costume of a hospital nurse. But this was the girl that wished she had a brother, and had said she did not like housework. It was a revelation to Charley; he thought all women liked the care of a house, and regretted the necessity of having to leave it for anything else.

The doctor was through with his call and ready to

go, when Charley asked him how long it would be before he could sit up.

"Oh, you can sit up any time now, there is nothing to prevent you. Of course, you will have to be careful of your arm; it is broken above your elbow, but it is doing nicely, and in a few weeks you will be as good as new," and laughing at his own wit, he bowed himself out of the room. The nurse felt safe now to leave her patient for a little while, so when she heard the bell ring, she went to the dining-room, and after eating her own supper brought to him a dainty lunch on a tray. She was surprised when she entered the room to find the bed vacated. As she stopped in wonder, a voice from the arm-chair said, "The man is clothed and in his right mind," and looking towards the window she saw her patient dressed and sitting there, evidently enjoying himself. She, too, enjoyed the joke, although at her own expense, and drew a small table to his side and proceeded to give him his supper.

"How long have I been here, said her companion.

"One week yesterday. I did not think you would be able to wait on yourself so soon after being so sick."

Charley laughed. "Oh, I have my right arm and can stand on my feet, and now I can see, I will not trouble you for so much attention, as I suppose your services are needed by those less fortunate."

"I am not a regular nurse, but have taken charge of this room because the one that had it was away to recuperate her own health."

Charley looked at her while she was speaking, and a thought came to him that made him ask quickly, "Do you know anyone in this house now by the name of Kenyon?"

"Yes," was the answer, "I know them well, a sick woman and her daughter who is waiting on her. They occupy the next room. Do you want to see them?"

"Well, it was with a friend of theirs I had business, a Miss Berthy McDonell; do you know her?"

"That is my name," was the timid reply.

"Well, then, I suppose you are my sister," said Charley, looking into her flushed face earnestly.

"Your sister," said Berthy, springing up and retreating a few steps from him. "What do you mean? I have no brother. I am the daughter of Robert McDonell, of Summerville."

He was sorry he had told her so abruptly. She was trembling and frightened at what she heard, never for a moment giving it credence. He had said all kinds of foolish things when he was delirious, but with his eyes covered she had not minded. But now, as he was looking at her so intently, she was afraid she had a maniac on her hands, and was looking around for some means of escape, when the door opened and her cousin Roger came in on tip-toe. "How is your—well, if it isn't Montgomery, the preacher, that is here." And he recognized his old acquaintance.

"I thought all the time it was someone I knew, but that white rag over your eyes bothered me like sixty and I could not make you out."

Before he had time to say any more, Berthy had him by the arm and whispered in his ear, "You must not talk to him, he is so delirious; he took me for his sister just now."

"He doesn't look crazy. Are you sure he is?"

"No, I am not crazy," said Charley, laughing. "Sit here, McDonell, and let me tell you what I have got to say." And in as few words as possible he told the two surprised ones his story. Berthy did not know whether she was glad or sorry. In the week that she had taken care of this young man she had told herself many times that he seemed near to her.

In the night, as she bathed his head and chafed his cramped hands and feet, he did not seem like a stranger at all, but she thought it was because he was so good, and he talked of his sister so much. Now, as she thought of this the tears would come, and sitting down by his side, her face buried on the arm of the chair, she wept as though her heart would break. Her brother put his arm around her; he did not know what to say. Roger's eyes were filled with tears, and to hide his emotion he went to find Rachel and tell her what had happened. As he met her in the hall, the spirit of mischief, always predominating in him, prompted him to say that Berthy had made a "mash" on her patient, and they were getting so spooney that he had left the room. Of course, the girl would not believe anything so absurd about her friend, and knowing as she did how Roger delighted in teasing his cousin, she, of course, scouted the idea. He

declared he was telling the truth, and said, "If you do not believe me, just come and see for yourself, although, I must acknowledge, it is very humiliating to have to prove everything I say because you have taken it into your perverse little head to doubt my veracity. To punish you for so heinous a crime I shall demand an apology from you the moment I have proved the truth of my statement." By the time he had delivered his speech they were at the door, and Rachel was laughing so hard that she was afraid some one would hear her. She expected to see Berthy bathing the sick man's head, or fanning him, and was surprised to see him sitting up in a chair, the bandage off his face, and Berthy sitting by him, her head leaning on his shoulder, and to complete Roger's triumph, as they opened the door Charley kissed his sister tenderly. The look of mingled surprise, indignation and sadness that overspread the face of Rachel so gratified her companion that he could hardly refrain from shouting aloud, and had to bite his moustache to keep quiet.

When he could command his voice, he said, as Rachel seemed on the point of crying: "We will go in and give them both a good blowing up. They will be a disgrace to the whole institution."

She drew back, saying in a whisper, "No, we will not go in." But Roger would not let her escape, and in a moment more she was laughing and crying at the news just as Berthy herself had done.

"So you are the sister that we thought had run away?" said Rachel. "And you have got one of your

wishes, at least, for it was only to-day that you were wishing you had a brother."

"And the brother is broken completely down by the weight of his responsibility," said Roger.

"Oh, do be quiet," said Ray, thinking that perhaps this stranger might not enjoy Roger's original jokes, but Charley laughed heartily, and said "I suppose you can sympathize with me, for you held the responsible position of cousin long enough to know a little of its weight; allow me to congratulate you on its recent removal," and he extended his hand, which Roger shook with mock gravity. It was all so ridiculous, that the merriment became general, even Berthy herself smiling at the gay sally; for she very well knew that the young men were trying to cheer her up, and put her at ease in her new position.

Rachel, remembering that she had left her mother with a friend who had called, arose quickly to go back to her charge, and Roger went with her, leaving the newly found relatives alone.

There was much that Charley wanted to say to his sister, but she would not allow him to talk any more, seeing how pale and tired he looked, although as anxious as himself to hear more about her future home in the West. After he had lain down on his couch to rest, Berthy stole away to see if, when alone, she could realise what had happened to her. She knew it meant a separation from her old friends and her home at Hill-Crest. Then this brother was a comparative stranger, though he did not seem like one. These thoughts came to her in rapid succession, as her

thoughts generally did ; but underneath them all there was a feeling of exultation, a sensation of release, that strengthened each moment, and every object she looked at seemed to convey to her heart the one word — freedom. Free from drudgery, free to read and study, and see the wonders of this wonderful world.

Her past life was fast slipping away from her, and in the short time that had intervened since her new relationship was made known, a life-time of longed-for pleasures had passed before her imagination.

When Rachel went back to her mother she found her very restless, owing, perhaps, to the long visit from her friend ; but when the sick woman saw Roger she smiled, and holding out her hand, she said : " Sing to me." It pleased both the young people to know, as they did, how much Mrs. Kenyon was learning to depend on Roger for comfort. With his naturally jubilant disposition, it seemed a little strange that his presence could be at all useful in an invalid's chamber. But he brought that cheerfulness with him that made her feel that the way was made less dreary for her daughter, and that alone would suffice to make him a welcome guest at the dying woman's bedside, and then his soft, clear voice was always ready with a hymn. Or he would read for any length of time, never seeming weary, or thinking of anything but the pleasure he was bringing to the aged saint, who would soon be beyond the ministrations of earthly kindness. Now, as he sat by her side she said to him : " If my own boy had lived, he would have been just thine age,

and I wonder if he would have taken as much trouble for me as thou hast."

"I owe more to you than I can ever hope to repay," said Roger, "and what little comfort I can be to you gives me more pleasure than you are able to realise. I needed all my life the influence that you have thrown around me, and I dare not think of my lonely life when I shall be deprived of it."

There was silence for a few minutes, then Mrs. Kenyon said: "Berthy is a good friend to thee, and now as she will shortly go back to her home again, will need thy friendship, as her people do not seem to understand her as we have learned to do; and I feel convinced that with proper companions and sympathetic encouragement, she will become a good and useful woman. Perhaps she is not very brilliant, and certainly not handsome, but she is one that will leave the world better for having lived in it." Roger looked at Rachel, his face glowing with suppressed eagerness to tell of Berthy's changed fortune, and receiving a nod of approval, told Mrs. Kenyon what had come to the life of their mutual friend. Rachel did not think the simple narrative would excite her mother very much, especially as Roger prepared the way so carefully by saying that Berthy had never seemed like the other young ladies at Hill-Crest; but when he had finished and said, "Now we will have to think of her as Berthy Montgomery, instead of McDonell." His listener gave a start, and said in a voice louder than she had been won't to use for many a day, "Mont-

gomery, did you say? Is she the daughter of Charles Montgomery?"

"Yes," said Roger, "and her brother's name is Charles, too, for Harold always called him Charley.

"Then she is my sister Rachel's own child."

The excitement was too much for her weakened frame, and a sinking spell followed that threatened to end in immediate death. Although Rachel had long since given up all hope of her mother's life, yet she now blamed herself for allowing this story to be told to her, and still here was something that ought to be known. It did seem that one revelation followed another so rapidly that it was almost too much for those that were well to endure. All night the Death Angel seemed to hover near, ready to carry away the spirit from her fainting, trembling body. Roger had taken Berthy away from her brother's side long enough to tell her what Mrs. Kenyon had said, for he felt it would be doing a great wrong to let this woman die before she knew that the one she had loved so well in life was indeed her own mother's sister.

But they thought best to let Charley get a little more strength before he was made aware of it. As the morning began to dawn, Mrs. Kenyon became more calm, and fell into a refreshing sleep.

The doctor, who had been all night with her, and knew the cause of the alarming condition, said to the anxious group, "She is better now, and if on awakening she remembers what you were talking about I would advise you to let Mr. Montgomery and his sister see her at once; for you must realize," he con-

tinued, turning to Rachel, "that it is only a question of a few days at most with her. I am very sorry to say these things, but think it is better that you should be prepared ; and I want to say further, that I am glad to see you surrounded by friends, and I congratulate you on finding so good a man as Mr. Montgomery for a cousin. He is, indeed, a relative to be proud of. I have seen his name mentioned a score of times in the papers as one of the leading divines in the city where he lives."

"Will he be able to come in here if my mother wishes to see him?"

"Oh! yes, he is all right. The reason we tied a bandage over his eyes was on account of the cut on his forehead, and then his head was a little hurt. But with the exception of his broken arm, there is nothing the matter with him now. His life and habits have always been so pure that there is not a particle of disease about him. I never look into his face, that the word "noble" does not present itself to my mind. I wish we had more young men like him." And the doctor hurried away, reproving himself for spending so much time moralizing. There was no perceptible change in Mrs. Kenyon all that day, nor during the night following.

In the meantime, Berthy had told her brother of the addition to the family tree ; and although he had never seen the aunt, he knew by the kindness she had shown his sister that she must be a good woman, and he felt drawn towards her.

Berthy, in telling him how much the Kenyons had

done for her, made known to his alert perceptions that there had really been very little effort on the part of the McDonells to study the wants and wishes of the adopted daughter; but when he hinted at the cause of her loneliness, he found that he had here a defender for the family he had almost been inclined to blame for his sister's unhappiness. She would not allow him for a moment to think the refined, lady-like girls were anything but kind and considerate to her.

She told of the times she had hurt *their* feelings by saying that she would never settle down to be a household drudge, and thought, the moment the words were out of her mouth, that but for their assuming that lowly position there would be no home comforts for any of the family. In the matter of an education, hers was far superior to that of any of the others, and she added, "Now, as I get older, I do not wonder that there seemed to be no way for me to obtain knowledge, as I think I would have carried it to the point of fanaticism, and God knew me better than I knew myself."

Charley was beginning to know his sister's disposition better, and comparing it, as he did, with his own, he was glad to see that she, too, had learned to rest on the almighty strength of God's love.

He knew that such natures as theirs must *know* that a loving Father had built this barrier between them and their ambitious aspirations, and that He did it for their good, or they would have beaten out their lives long ago on its unyielding bars.

"Where did you learn that sweet secret of submission? I was older than you are before I accepted it."

"From my spiritual guide," said Berthy, smiling and motioning toward the room occupied by her Quaker friend.

"Then you have, indeed, much to be grateful to her for. I meet a great many life-long Christians who do not seem to understand what I mean by the Fatherhood of God; it is the only true source of happiness."

He then went on to tell her something of his past life; how many struggles he had, and how mercifully he had been led through them all. "I have always felt that in God's hand I was the instrument sent to save the soul of poor Uncle John; that was the strongest temptation I ever had to resist.

"There I was in a strange city, with only a few dollars in the world, and not enough to pay my board a week. I felt I had some right to his money, for I was his legal heir; but he denounced all forms of religion, and declared I should not have anything to do with the ministry if I lived with him. His lawyer, after kindly inviting me into his house, advised me to lay aside my radical views, and accept the home and money he, too, thought I had a right to expect. I tell you it was a battle I found hard to fight, but the victory more than paid for the conflict. The last two years of my uncle's life were those of perfect peace. He knew he had been selfish and worldly, and he tried to make amends by doing all the good he could before he died. After he became

almost helpless, I often carried him in my arms to the carriage, where, lying among soft cushions, we would go to some poor quarter of the city, and while I pointed a dying soul to God, he, with his money, would provide for their temporal needs.

"I cannot tell which was the more comforted—they by the receiving, or he by the giving. Often coming home, when I asked him if he was tired, his answer would be, 'Oh, I have not thought of myself at all. I can see him now as he looked on one occasion, when we found in an old shanty a Union soldier sick, without food or fire; uncle sent a boy for supplies. The boy and I built a fire, made the man some tea, and brought him some food, but he would not eat it until he was lifted up on his knees, so that he could thank God for these mercies, and pray for a special blessing on the saint that had been sent to him with these comforts.

"Uncle's face was a study. It seemed to me that all the hard, stern lines that had so disfigured him, were smoothed out that day, and they never came back again. He told me going home that he never was happier in his life, and said, 'Charley, my boy, it was your standing firm that made me first think there was something in religion, and now I have tested it and know there is everything in it.'

"We looked after the old soldier until he died (which was only a few weeks after we first found him), holding uncle's hand in his, and saying with the simplicity of a little child, 'Good-bye, old comrade; we will meet beyond the picket line.'

"How thankful I have always been that I could be with uncle to the last. He depended so much on me for care, and yet he would not allow me to leave a single duty undone that the Church required. You know the month following my arrival in Denver I was given a place in Mr. Darlington's church as his colleague, and uncle was just as anxious to have me make a good impression on my audience as I was to make it.

"Mr. Raymond used to laugh, and say, 'It pleases me to see the pride your uncle takes in you. He said to me when alone, 'I am afraid Charley will become vain and conceited, the people are making too much fuss over him,' and at the same time he himself was completely carried away with the fact that he had the honor to be an uncle of the popular young preacher.' Mr. Raymond is a lawyer and can flatter as well as reprimand a client," continued Charley, fearing lest his sister would think him a boaster. But there was not the slightest danger of *her* thinking any evil of him who, in *her* eyes at least, was perfection. Seeing her so interested in his work he continued: "There is always an opportunity in Colorado for any amount of Christian work; a great many men with weak lungs go there every year to see if the bracing air will not restore them to health. Some do get better, and some go too late, and often arrive there without money or friends, to die, perhaps in a hospital. The ladies of the church make them a special care, taking them little comforts, writing letters to their friends, and in some cases praying for and

with them. I go as often as I can, and encourage the members of my church to do the same."

"May I go with you, when we get there? I just love to do anything of that kind," said Berthy, her eyes sparkling with the eager question.

"Why, yes; I would be glad to have you go for the boy's sake and for the sake of the example?"

"The example?" and she looked a little puzzled.

"Have all your good works been done simply for the pleasure of doing them?" he asked.

"I never did much for the good of humanity, but I have always felt that in some way, what I have done would perhaps make up for my own shortcomings."

"What do you call your work here in this place; you have had other patients besides me, have you not?"

"Yes, a young man died in this room whom I waited on for two weeks; he was buried the day before you came."

"I think my little sister has unconsciously been preparing herself for the duties that lay before her," said Charley, his heart full of thankfulness that he had found in her just the qualities of mind and heart that he most loved and admired. "But, do you never have any thoughts of worldly pleasure?"

"I never felt that I was really prepared for the society that I wanted to mingle with. I would rather be alone than to associate with uneducated people, and I cannot meet those who *are* educated as an equal, so I preferred to remain out of society altogether."

"You shall have your taste for cultivated associa-

tion satisfied when we go to our home, for I have gathered around me just the class of people that you speak of. There are many strangers coming and going continually in a city like the one I live in, and I, like you, am always anxious to meet men of talent and intellect, and my friends knowing so well what pleasure the acquaintanceship will afford me, feel free at any time to bring to my house any such that they chance to meet. I make only one stipulation, and that is they must be believers in God. I have no time to listen to agnostic theories." He continued: "If *you* wish to attend school, you may, or if you prefer it, I will get you a governess at home."

Berthy's face glowed with anticipation; she felt it was like a dream of fairyland, and her heart was full of gratitude. Her brother seeing it, said, "I think we both have much to thank God for. I expected to find a good sister, but I did not dare to hope for the congenial spirit that I have really discovered in her." He waited for some comment, but none came; her emotion would not allow her to speak. "I find," he added, "that in searching for silver I have found gold."





CHAPTER XII.

FORGIVEN.



EARLY two weeks had elapsed since Charley Montgomery had left Hill-Crest. Robert McDonell felt that in some way he had not made a good impression on the son of his old friend. He knew he could not blame the young man for having some misgivings in regard to his sister, and it seemed strange, too, as he himself thought of it, how little the whole family had thought it necessary to look after Berthy. She, from childhood, had seemed capable of managing her own affairs, and almost to resent any interference on their part, so that it had become a settled habit in the household to let her have her own way in everything pertaining to self-government.

But now as a stranger appeared on the scene and inquired what this indifference meant, it was a question hard to answer, and Mr. McDonell said all he *could* say: "That she was not like his own," but realized while he was saying it that there was no satisfaction in any

such explanation. After Charley had been gone more than a week and no letter had come to them, a sort of gloom seemed to settle down on the family. The father asked every night if they had heard from Berthy, and when the answer came that they had not, he would sigh heavily; but perhaps no one member of the household felt the silence more than Edith. When Harold and his family returned to Lake View, she would not go with them as she had intended, but remained at Hill-Crest, thinking that in a few days Berthy and her new brother would come, and she wanted to be there when they came. But, as the days passed and no word was received from them, she began to think they had gone back to Denver without coming to bid them good-bye. When she told her father and Grace of her suspicions they both thought there might be something in it, and Grace wondered if the brother had bought Berthy any new clothes before he took her to that large city. It troubled her kind heart to think how he would feel on seeing his sister for the first time, (if she could only have been there to prepare her for the meeting how happy she would have been), and Mr. Montgomery was so well dressed himself. There was not a part of his elegant attire that had escaped her scrutiny, from his glossy beaver hat to the toe of his well-fitting boot. "He is one that understands what his position requires of him," and Grace threw back her head in a way that indicated much more of her thoughts on the subject than her words had implied. Her opinion in regard to this young man so pleased Edith that,

though usually quiet, she became quite interested in her sister's remarks, and they both looked forward to meeting him again.

Aunt Elizabeth had gone on a visit to New York and did not know anything about the change in the family affairs, as there was very little correspondence between them when she was away. As the days passed and no word came from Berthy, the remaining members of the McDonell home began to make preparations for their regular Thanksgiving visit to Lake View. The father would never consent to leave his home at Christmas, and so the girls had it arranged that they should all go to Kathey's home the week before Thanksgiving, and return home in time to prepare an old-fashioned Christmas dinner for the father's comfort. Harold and Kathey, and little Harry often came with them, and as this year there was one more Huntington to bring along the girls looked forward to an unusually merry Christmas. They felt sure that when Mrs. Kenyon died, Rachael would have to come home to make some arrangements concerning her school, so they waited to hear in this way something about the brother and sister. But the day before their departure, the young lady who had taken Rachel's place in the school called at Hill-Crest, and told them that she was going to teach there all winter, as the trustees had received a letter from Rachel saying she would not take the school again. Harold had left an invitation for Charley to come with Mr. McDonell and the girls to spend Thanksgiving at Lake View, and was therefore very much

surprised and disappointed to have them come alone. When they told him the Montgomery's had not been heard from he telegraphed at once to know what it all meant, and received a reply that Mrs. Kenyon was dead and would be buried that afternoon, and that the next day they might expect Charley, his sister and his cousin to be with them at Lake View.

"Mrs. Kenyon was dead." The words were simple enough, and did not surprise the people who read them, but no words could convey to the minds of those who knew her an adequate idea of what the going out of that beautiful life really was.

When she rallied from the death-like stupor that succeeded the sinking-spell, her first words were, "Can I see my sister's children?" and Rachel hastened to tell them of her mother's recovered consciousness. As soon as Charley looked into the face of his aunt he knew that her life was passing away very rapidly, and he therefore sought to say the words of comfort that the time would warrant; but as soon as she saw him she seemed to gain strength for the occasion, and although her voice was changed and very weak, she told him many things he had longed to hear of his father and mother's Christian life, and their love for each other, adding that they had both died while she and her husband were travelling in Europe for the latter's health, and that upon her return she could not find the children. While she was talking she kept a tight hold on Berthy's hand, as though she would have her know

that she loved her though she could not take her eyes from the face of her sister's handsome son. "Thou art like thy father, so strong and with such a brave look. Berthy will have a true friend; she does not need a protector; she never desires to do wrong, and can always take care of herself, but thee will love her when thee knows how grateful she is for every kind word or look."

Charley put his arm around his trembling sister, and said: "We both thank you for leading her to Christ and helping her to do what she has done for His glory."

"Oh," said the dying woman, "I am glad to hear thee say that. She will yet do much for the Master."

Then she took her daughter's hand and pressed it to her lips and looked around the room as though there was some one else she expected to see. Rachel thought she knew whom her mother wanted, but she was so overcome with grief that she did not dare to trust her voice, for she was anxious to hear every word from the beloved lips, feeling sure they would be the last she would ever hear from them on earth. The door opened softly and Roger came to the bedside. As soon as Mrs. Kenyon saw him a smile lit up her face, and she reached for his hand. Rachel tried to draw hers away, thinking her mother had some words of advice or counsel for him alone, but her hand was retained and put in that of the young man, and with what seemed to be her last breath the mother and loving counsellor said sweetly, "You both have my blessing." Roger could scarcely keep from

weeping aloud, so great was his emotion, but he mastered his feelings. Knowing how well the sainted woman loved to have him sing, he commenced, in a tremulous but clear voice,

“Christian, the morn breaks sweetly o’er thee,
And all the midnight shadows flee.”

As he sang her eyes closed. He felt the hand that was laid on his grow colder, but it did not terrify him. He held tightly the little warm, quivering hand of Rachel, and felt that his own could keep her from realizing any terror in the presence of what did not seem to him like an ordinary death.

When Roger had finished the verse, Charley said, putting his hand on the placid brow, “It is over.”

There was no uncontrollable weeping. It did not seem right in the presence of this quiet, angelic form, to burst forth in loud, wailing cries. Rachel turned from the bed as the matron and nurses came in, and Roger led her out into the open air. Charley and Berthy went back to the room they occupied, and all that was mortal of the beloved Quakeress was left to the respectful ministration of strangers.

“Oh, you have come at last. I am nearly starved. The fire would not burn and I did not have any tea for my dinner, and I am almost crazy with a headache.”

“Well, never mind, I shall soon have the fire burning, and see, I have brought some nice peaches for your supper.”

"Oh, yes, 'never mind,' that is all very well for you to say. I think I ought to mind, sitting here all day alone and no one to speak to." And the old woman groaned and rubbed her head in a fretful, peevish way that was very annoying to the younger woman.

The rooms were small and scantily furnished, and were at the very top of a cheap tenement house in a large city. The inmates were unknown and uncared for by the other inhabitants of the Rookery, as the old building was called.

Geraldine McDonell and her mother had taken rooms in a better part of the city, but soon found that the expense of living was so great that they had to bring down their desires to their means, which were very limited. When Geraldine had been offered a position in a dry-goods store as saleswoman she, of course, expected to receive a good salary. She argued that girl clerks in stores dress like ladies, and therefore they must receive very high wages, but when she was given such small pay and complained to the other girls about it, they only laughed and said :

"We do not always tell how little we make, but let those outside think what they please. Some of us have fathers or brothers that pay our board, and all we make we have to dress ourselves with."

And so poor Geraldine saw there was no use in saying any more, but reduced the expense of her own and her mother's living, and tried to get along as best she could. The work was not so hard, but her mother worried and tormented her terribly, always taunting

her with her lack of management, or blaming her for not doing better at the store so she could get more wages. All this Geraldine bore with silent apathy. She never in her life had said a saucy, impudent word to her mother. In fact, she had always thought her the most sensible and cool-headed woman in the world, and had been led by her all her life, falling in with any plan that diplomatic lady saw fit to suggest. Many times they had laughed together about some deceitful piece of business that had brought about the desired result, and congratulated themselves on their forethought. But now the case was quite different. Geraldine saw that her mother had no real love for her, that she was willing to see her work day and night to bring her comfort and ease, and that she did not regret the loss of their money for her children's sake, but only for her own. She never spoke of Roger except when she wanted something Geraldine could not buy for her, and then she would begin to wonder where that ungrateful boy was and why he did not bring or send her some money. It was beginning to dawn upon the mind of Geraldine that her past life had all been a mistake.

One day she was telling some of the girls in the store how wealthy her father had been, and saying "I never thought I should have to work for my living." One of the girls answered her in a practical, straightforward way, "Well, I have never been rich, or had any chance for a higher place than I now occupy, but I would like to know why you did not learn something thoroughly—music, or painting, or drawing, or

an accomplishment of some kind—that would now furnish you with a good-paying employment, instead of having to work with those like us that never had an opportunity for anything better.”

Geraldine could not answer. She remembered well how the German professor had said to her that she ought to cultivate her talent for music. But her mother had told him promptly that all her daughter desired was to be able to play a few pieces well that she might appear in society as other girls did; and so it was settled that she was to receive a smattering of music and a dozen other things, not having enough knowledge of any of them to be of much use to her.

To-night as she came home she stopped at the post office and got a letter (the postman did not visit her portion of the city), and after her mother had drunk her tea and found fault with it, and said the peaches were sour and not fit to eat, and otherwise made herself generally disagreeable, Geraldine thought of the letter. It was from Kathey, asking them to come and spend Thanksgiving at Lake View. As soon as the name of the place was mentioned Mrs. McDonell flew in a rage, pouring out her wrath as usual on her daughter with the same words she had used so often, that if Geraldine had had any sense at all she could have married Harold herself, instead of fooling around until he had taken that girl of Bob's, and saying that Kathey was smart enough to catch him while she was looking on. This last was too much. Geraldine knew that Kathey had not manoeuvred for him at all, but had simply won him by

her unassuming, innocent way and honest womanliness. Turning to her mother she told her so. This was the first time she had ever answered any of her abusive language, and she added, "The reason Roger does not care to come home is because he has become so tired of deceit. Now," she said, as her mother did not make any reply, "we will turn over a new leaf and try to be at least honest in word and thought. It is very nice of Kathey to invite us to her place at all, for Harold knows, if *she* doesn't, that we did all we could to keep them apart, and now she is so well situated, it is a wonder to me that she speaks to us. We would not if the tables were turned. She is a noble, Christian woman, and I am going to tell her when I go there that she deserves all the happiness she is enjoying. I despise myself when I think how I used to dress in my best, and did it only to make them feel bad, because they had nothing to compare with it. Roger told me at the time that it was not right, but I was doing your bidding then, and now you are paying me for it."

Mrs. McDonell was speechless. She had never heard her daughter say so much on any subject, and it seemed as if the very earth had risen up to reprove her for her folly and wickedness. She looked at Geraldine in surprise, and wondered where she had conceived such queer ideas. When she thought of this girl's changing her mode of thinking to one of forgiveness and charity it seemed that there was already at her very feet a chasm that could not be crossed. She had said that she was done with deceit,

and surely that would mean that the daughter was taking the same ground the son had, and it meant *for her* complete desertion. With this thought her tears flowed freely, and Geraldine relapsed into silence. There had never been any demonstration of affection between the two, and *now* the ice of reserve could not be broken even by a mother's tears; so the evening passed as many others had, with no word of love to smooth the sharp points of poverty or make the battle for an existence any the less hard.

On the morning of the funeral Rachel arose quietly, before Berthy awoke, dressed herself, and stole out on tiptoe to take a last farewell of her mother at an hour when no one would disturb her. There was no one in the hall as she passed through, but as she came to the door of the room where her mother lay she could hear some one crying. Who could it be? Charley had gone to a hotel the night before. Berthy was sleeping, and she had heard the matron go away before she left her room; but opening the door carefully she saw Roger kneeling by the casket, his face buried in the white lilies he had sent the day before, crying as a boy would have done for his own mother. Rachel went quickly to his side and would have spoken to him, but her own heart was too full, and she sank down by him and they both wept together. Roger was the first to regain his composure. He had tried to cheer her since her mother's death as best he could, and had kept his own sorrow under control that he might be better able to do so. When they arose and

stood by the lovely sleeping form, Roger said, as he looked down into the sad little face by his side: "Your mother was more to me, Ray, than I can ever tell."

She did not answer. It never seemed strange to her that anyone should love her dear mother.

His past life came back very clear to his mind as he looked on the quiet face of the Quakeress. He had always felt since that terrible day in the jail that he had her prayers, and now as he stood by her side he felt lonely indeed.

Rachel took from her pocket a little Bible. The edges were frayed and the leather worn rough by constant use, and she looked up at her companion and said, in an apologetic tone, her voice low and tremulous, "I am going to put her Bible in her hand; it seems so much a part of her that I think it ought to be—." But before she could say any more Roger had taken the book from her hand and, pressing it to his lips, said:

"No, do not put it in the ground; give it to me, I owe my soul's salvation to this little book."

The face that the girl turned toward him was so full of inquiry, that he did not doubt any longer that her mother's visit to him in his hour of trouble and disgrace was unknown to her.

He did not stop to wonder why it was kept a secret. Berthy, too, had known all about it at the time. Often, when he would have told Rachel of his great love for her, this one dark cloud in his past life came up so plainly before him that he felt it was a mean thing to do. Her mother had done for him what she would

probably have done for any other boy in his place, and he would not presume on that kind deed to offer himself as an equal in her family ; but, when with her dying hand she had joined theirs, he had taken hope, and now to know that through all these years she had never told her daughter anything of his crime and folly, argued well for him so far as the mother's faith was concerned. But he would never ask Ray Kenyon to link her pure, spotless life with his until he had told her all, and heard her words of forgiveness.

It was not exactly the time or place for a declaration of love, but Roger knew that Ray was waiting for an explanation of his words concerning the little Bible, so he took her hand and said, " Come down into the parlor, and I will tell you all about it."

This room had been intended for the private use of the matron and family at the hospital, but after the first few weeks of the Kenyon's stay there it had been offered them for their use at any time they saw fit.

Now, as Roger and Ray entered the room the late November sunshine was streaming through the window. There was a bright fire shining behind the polished grate, and the warm crimson curtains and velvet-cushioned chairs and sofas all seemed so inviting and home-like that it inspired the sinking spirit of the young man to make a full confession, and trust to her love and goodness for forgiveness, if for nothing more. So, drawing a settee in front of the cheerful blaze he sat down by her side and told her all, not sparing himself in the least, but saying in conclusion, " Now, you know all about me, can I ever hope to live

a pure enough life to feel that I am worthy to say more to you than I have said now ? ”

She looked at him with a world of love in her face, and said simply : “ Your sin was against God, not against me, and if he has forgiven you I will. I know my mother did love you and believed you good and noble, for she said so to me less than a week before she died.”

I have said that Roger did not intend to say any words of love to Ray at this time, but his great, warm heart could not hold back the passionate yearning he had felt for this girl so long, and now with her sweet face so close to his, and her words of forgiveness and approval ringing in his ears, he was not responsible for taking her in his arms and kissing her flushed face, while he poured out his love in a very torrent of words. There was no spirit of the coquette in honest Ray, and, shy and timid as she was, he knew his love was returned. The past seemed slipping away from him, and in its place a happy present and bright future was all their own. They sat there a long time. At last Rachel said :

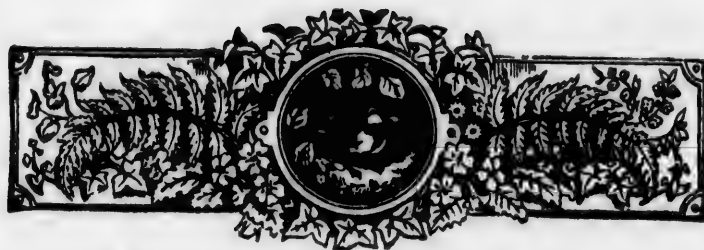
“ It does not seem right for us to be so happy and mother so lately gone from us.”

“ No,” said Roger, “ it would not seem right if we did not know she is happy, too. We will love each other better that we know she loved us both.”

When they heard the breakfast-bell ring they started guiltily, having no idea how much time had elapsed since they had come into the parlor. Roger went away, and Rachel joined Berthy at the table.

There was much to do. Charley soon appeared with the telegram. It had been sent to him, in care of the hospital, and he asked the girls how he should answer it. Rachel had never been to Lake View, though Berthy had often told her what a grand old place it was. It was arranged that she should go with them, and Charley answered the telegram in the way we have mentioned, knowing that Harold would not be able to understand who the cousins could be.





CHAPTER XIII.

AT LAKE VIEW



AS Charley thought of going to Lake View his mind naturally turned to the object of his daily thoughts and nightly dreams. Any other but he would have staid at Hill-Crest until he knew from his adored whether he could hope or despair, but with the strong sense of duty that pervaded his whole being, he felt he must first make sure of the whereabouts of his sister before he had any right to determine his own fate. Now, that this matter was settled so satisfactorily (and he, too, was beginning to realize that he was being favored in many ways with blessings he had felt in early life would never be his), he allowed himself pleasant anticipations in meeting again at the home of his friend the one woman that had been to him more than all others.

As the train neared the depot and Berthy caught sight of the Huntington carriage, she could scarcely wait to be handed out, for there, with his chubby face surrounded by golden-brown curls, and his whole form wriggling in the hands of Edith, was her little

nephew Harry, screaming with delight at the first view of Aunt Berthy. She did not realize how much she loved the baby boy until she felt his arms around her neck and his cold nose pressing her face. She held him hugged close all the way to Lake View.

Kathey was very busy, and Harold had some important business on hand, so they had asked Edith to go to the depot to meet the guests, a thing she was very glad to do, and as Harry was so delighted at the return of Berthy he was allowed to go, too.

When they were all seated in the carriage, Charley proceeded to tell of the accident that had befallen him, and how he had first seen his sister in the garb of a nurse, saying, as he noticed the look of pity in Edith's eyes, "Oh, she gave me the best of care, but thought I was crazy when I called her my sister."

"I think we all feel a little unsettled on that subject," said Edith, smiling at Berthy, "and think sometimes of contesting your right to her. Possession, you know, is nine points in the law, and we held that for nineteen years, though I must confess that the change of ownership has improved her very much."

"Well, of course, I cannot judge of that, as I first made her acquaintance with my eyes covered, which the young lady herself thought was very fortunate."

This was the first hint he had ever given the girls that he had overheard them talking the first day of his convalescence, and they looked at each other as much as to say, "What did he hear?" This look of consternation pleased him so much that he told Edith what they said, keeping back very prudently Berthy's

allusion to her home life, but imitating Ray's voice when chiding her for useless wishing.

Edith laughed heartily, but remembered just here that Ray had lost her mother since she had last seen her, and felt a sense of guilt at not mentioning it before.

As that subject did not seem to suit the general good-feeling of the party she very wisely forbore referring to it, but said to Mr. Montgomery: "Oh, you did not bring the cousin that you spoke of in your telegram."

"Yes, I did, allow me to present to you Miss Rachel Kenyon."

"What! I did not know you were so fortunate as to find Rachel among your own relatives," and she looked at him in surprise.

"I did not know she was a cousin of mine until I had made my sister's acquaintance."

He did not think it necessary to go into detail concerning the development of their identity; but said abruptly, "Roger is doing well in Philadelphia, isn't he?"

"Roger! have you seen him?"

"Oh, yes," said Berthy, before her brother could answer, "he is in a large book store there. He came to see us every day we were at the hospital, and his was the last familiar face we saw at the depot."

"We have not heard anything from him for five years or more. Kathey invited his mother and sister to spend Thanksgiving; they wrote yesterday they would come, but never mentioned his name. I wonder if they know where he is?"

"I asked him a few days ago," said Charley, "if he ever saw his family, and he said no. He seems to think they do not care anything for him. I do not know them, but it is queer his mother should not have any love for him. "He says," added Charley, laughing, "they are too much 'stuck' on style to think of him."

"How like Roger that sounds, but I think if he saw them now he would not accuse them of being stylish. Geraldine has to work very hard to support her mother," said Edith.

"Roger told me," said Berthy, always ready to defend the absent, "that when he received a larger salary he was going to help Geraldine support their mother; he said he thought it his duty."

"That sounds hard," said Charley, "to hear a son talk of duty, with no love; duty to clear his own conscience, and no love to make the act a pleasure."

"It is her own fault that he does not love her," and Berthy's eyes grew black with suppressed indignation.

"We will admit all that," said her brother, "but it is none the less sad. Roger is a noble fellow, and will do the right thing by her if he is given an opportunity. I am sorry his mother does not appreciate him better. It is a painful fact that parents do not always study the characters of their children. There is not a young man in the city of Philadelphia that is living a purer, better christian life than Roger McDonell."

"Christian!" said Edith, in a surprised tone, "then he has become one very lately."

"About five years ago," said Ray, speaking for the first time.

"Oh! that is since we knew him, but it did not seem to me he could ever be a christian, he was so fond of fun."

"Do you think the love of fun ought to prevent one from being a follower of Christ? Some kinds of fun are very beneficial to both soul and body," said Charley.

"Yes," said Edith, blushing, as the keen, direct question was put to her; "we can, perhaps, become Christians and yet retain our love of enjoyment to a certain degree. But do you not think that an inordinate love of worldly amusement has kept a great many people from making a profession of religion?"

"Undoubtedly it has, and yet if they cannot see in the service of God a greater pleasure than selfish indulgence, there is nothing to be gained by Christianity in general, or the person in particular. There is a great mistake in my mind, in the efforts the churches are making to furnish amusement for the young people of the congregation; they can never hope to rival the world in that respect, and keep sacred the church rules, and therefore their attempts only meet with ridicule from those they are seeking to benefit. Let the unconverted once understand that there is rest and peace in the Christian life, and they will only be too glad to avail themselves of the opportunity it affords. There is not so much seeking for pleasure in this world for its own sake as we are apt to think, but it is a desire to drown care that

impels so many to places of amusement ; and if they could be made to know, I say, that in a life hidden with Christ in God there is complete immunity from worldly care, I do not believe the churches of America would be able to hold the throng of weary workers that would come asking to be admitted."

"And do you think it was this desire for rest that brought Roger into the church when he was so young?"

"I do not know the circumstances of his conversion," and Charley looked at Berthy, while she answered.

"It was very similar to a need of rest; he was lonely, and felt he had no friends, and was in deep trouble at the time he accepted Christ."

Edith's eyes were filled with tears, but she dashed them away and thought no one noticed them, as just at that time Harry sprang up and exclaimed, "Now, we are home; come, Aunt Berfie, and see my new pony."

As the carriage stopped at the porch Harold and Kathey were there to welcome them, and, like Edith, wanted to know where the cousin was, and the story had to be gone over again about the new relatives. They were both delighted to see how much Charley appeared to love his sister in the little time he had known her.

When he met Mr. McDonell he took him by the hand and asked to be forgiven for the way he had seemed to mistake their treatment of Berthy. They were alone in the drawing room, and Charley saw the old man was deeply affected, and hastened to say, "I

feel as if I could never repay you for the kindness you did my poor father and mother in taking the helpless babe into your heart and home ; and I know it meant sacrifice on your part many times to keep in your family this child. Will you not let me show in a small measure my gratitude by giving you something more substantial than empty words of thanks ?”

“ No, no,” said the warm-hearted Irishman, “ I dare not let you give me a cent of pay, for my wife said to me the day before she died : ‘ I know God will raise up friends for my motherless children,’ and I knew she was thinking of what we had done for Berthy when she said it, so I will not spoil her work of charity by taking money from man for the work she did for God.”

Charley could not press the matter any farther, but assured his friend that he should always stand ready to do anything in his power for the kindness shown his sister, and added, laughing : “ She is so much like myself that I do not think we will ever quarrel.”

“ Who is that Yankee walking up and down the garden path with Miss Edith ?” said Adolphus, coming into Harold’s studio one morning and pointing in the direction of the chrysanthemum-bordered walk that could be plainly seen from the window.

“ Hello, my boy, when did you arrive ?” said Harold, on hearing his friend’s voice close to his side.

“ Just this minute. I am all dusty and wanted to get a bath and change my clothes before I met your family, so I asked the servant to show me upstairs

before she announced my arrival. But you have not answered my question."

"Oh," said Harold, looking out of the window, "that is Charley Montgomery, you have often heard me speak of him."

"The preacher that you said was so poor and proud?"

"The same."

"I did not expect to see such a fine fellow as this; why, he looks like a gentleman."

"So he is, in the American sense of the word."

"Yes, but you know what I mean, he has not the appearance of one who has ever known toil or poverty—and then his clothes."

"Is that the reason you called him a Yankee when you first came in?"

"That is the very reason; I can tell one wherever I see him. We English get the best clothes we can to make us appear well, but you fellows have a way of putting on anything, so that you seem to be making the suit look well, instead of the suit making you look well. I don't understand it."

"Come, come," said Harold laughing, "no more of your flattery. One would think you had just paid a visit to Blarney Castle;" but he saw the young man was very much in earnest, and also knew why Mr. Montgomery's personal appearance was so troubling him.

There was a grieved look on his usually expressionless face, and he said, "I am not flattering, I am simply stating the truth as it has forced itself on my mind ever since I have been in the 'blooming country.'"

And he walked off into his own room with the air of one who had been most cruelly deceived.

Harold looked again into the garden and could not doubt but Adolphus had seen the gallant, tender manner in which Charley folded around Edith a scarlet shawl he had taken from the hand of Nettie (the nurse girl), but could not feel the pity for Adolphus that he would if he had not thought it was his pride and not his heart that was touched.

The weather was beautiful. Although it was the day before Thanksgiving the sun had come out warm and bright in the morning, making one think that it was not so near winter after all, but Mr. McDonell shook his head when the girls were rejoicing over the prospect of the nice warm days to come, and said: "This is only a pet day; there will be a storm before to-morrow."

And Charley said: "Then it behooves us to take advantage of it. Will you go with me, Edith, and take a farewell look at the chrysanthemums? I saw the gardener with some suspicious looking weapon this morning in their vicinity, and am afraid before night he will have them rooted out of the ground." Edith, nothing loth, had gone with him just as Adolphus, having driven from the station in a hired conveyance, made his appearance at Lake View.

When Harold first brought home his bride he had intended to spend the winters in the city, but after one season there Kathey said to him: "Would you not rather stay at Lake View? There is too much of an air of moving in this change twice a year; and then

our country home is quite comfortable and we do not care for fashionable society. We can really be together by ourselves more here."

"I thought you would enjoy the change," he said, kissing her fondly. "As for myself, there is no place on earth I love so much as this home."

So it was settled. The house in town was sold and Lake View became the permanent residence of the Huntingtons. In the fall, as the nights began to grow longer and the air outside a little more crisp, Kathey would have the white curtains exchanged for those of a warmer hue, and cover the pale ecru-colored carpets here and there with large oriental rugs, and have brought into the sitting-room soft plush-covered chairs and sofas. With the windows filled with palms and flowering plants, the house seemed to defy the inclement weather, no matter how much the wind howled among the stately trees or tossed up the huge blocks of ice in the lake. As the holiday season approached they always managed to draw around them a select circle of friends, young and old, who delighted in visiting at the elegant home of Mrs. Harold Huntington, who knew so well how to entertain and to make every one feel at home. It was a settled custom with this hospitable family to give a Thanksgiving party every year. The Misses McDonell were always there at that season, and it had become a habit to issue at least a hundred invitations to the young people of the neighborhood to assemble at Lake View at an early hour on the evening of Thanksgiving Day, where they were sure of a royal good time.

Harold and Kathey felt a little disturbed on the subject this year. They did not expect to have among them anyone that had so lately buried a friend, and Mrs. Kenyon was an aunt to Charley and Berthy, as well as a mother to Rachel, but the invitations were out, and there was expected Signor Selaska from Boston, a musician Harold had become acquainted with in Russia, and Adolphus was more than ready to do his part in entertaining the guests. What could be done? As they were asking each other this question Charley came into the library where they were talking to get a book.

"Here," said Harold, "is some one who probably can help us out of our dilemma?"

"How deep are you in? Very much depends on that." And he held up his arm from which he had removed the bandage that morning.

"O!" said Kathey, laughing, "it will not need any physical strength. Sit down here and let me tell you all about it."

When she had made the situation known, Charley said quickly: "What kind of a party is it going to be?"

"We call it," said Harold, "a Thanksgiving reception, but, between ourselves, we think we are helping to build up thus a sentiment for pure, healthy amusement. When we had the first one the young people did not see how they could pass an evening without dancing, or cards, or games of any kind, but when they got here and found the room filled with flowers and paintings, the tables full of odd curios I had

gathered in my travels, and a band of jubilee singers and an elocutionist from New York, they came to the conclusion that there would have been no time to dance or play games of any kind. We have made it a point, too, to bring out the conversational powers of our guests in a way that has surprised themselves, and which could never be done by allowing them to become interested in the usual way of passing an evening. Kathey has also insisted on the young ladies being properly clothed"—but he did not finish the sentence, for his wife put her hand over his mouth.

Charley caught his meaning, however, and, looking into Mrs. Huntington's blushing face, said: "I see, I see; you did not want any cases of pneumonia following your party." They all laughed at the implied hint,

"Well," he continued, "if said party is on the plan you describe I cannot see why you are to make any changes on our account. As for Rachel, I know she would feel badly if she knew that you contemplated it for a moment."

Just then a merry laugh was heard in the hall, and Charley laughed too, as he said, "That is Berthy; her laugh is infectious. I tell her I never wait to hear what she is laughing at, for I know it is something good, so I get ready to enjoy it with her. I tell you, I am glad to take her home with me to wake the echoes in the old house."

At this moment the door was thrown open, and Berthy rushed in. "He is here," she called, as soon

as she saw who was in the room, and Grace came in after her with an open letter in her hand.

"We have been hunting all over the house for you, Charley," she said; "such fun! Aunt Elizabeth is married!"

"Then, there is nothing for me to do if the ceremony is over."

"No; but we want to know if you are acquainted with her husband, he is from Denver. Read the letter Grace," and Berthy seated herself on the arm of her brother's chair, and Grace began:

"*My Dear Niece*,—I have some news for you that will surprise you very much. I was married yesterday to a gentleman from Denver, Colorado. He was boarding at the house of a friend of my cousin's, where we went one evening to take tea, so I became acquainted with him, and in less than two weeks we were married. Of course, I am very particular about my personal appearance, and looked extremely well that evening, and he has told me since that he fell in love with me at first sight. I tell you this to let you girls know how important it is for a lady *always* to look well. ("She meant that for me," said Berthy). His name is Theodore J. Smith. He is a retired gentleman, living on the interest of his money."

"Do you know him?" said Berthy, looking into her brother's face.

"Why, it is *my* Theodore," said Charley, "you know I told you about his writing to me when my uncle wanted me to come to Denver."

"Oh, I thought it was Josh. Smith you said?"

"Theodore J." said Charley, laughing at the

puzzled faces around him. "He said when he went West he decided to drop the name of Joshua, it sounded so much like his past life."

"I wonder," said Kathey, "if Aunt Elizabeth recognized him?"

"I was thinking of that," said Harold, "and do you think he has any money?"

"My uncle willed him two thousand when he died, and I persuaded him to invest it out there where he could get eight per cent., and I suppose that is the interest he has made her believe he is living on. A rather scanty support for a retired gentleman with a wife, unless he intends to work at something, which I very much doubt."

"No," said Grace, "he would rather beg than work. But it seems as if Aunt Elizabeth must have known him, so she could not be so foolish as to depend on anything he says."

"He would never tell her who he was if he could possibly conceal his identity; he is deceitful enough for that," said Charley. "That is one reason why I did not keep him after uncle died, I could not trust him out of my sight."

"Oh," said Berthy, "they are well mated," she, too, is full of deceit, and perhaps has told him a lot of lies. I tell you my sympathies are with Theodore," and she laughed again, all the family joining in.

When Kathey and Grace heard Berthy discussing Aunt Elizabeth, it seemed to bring to their minds so many things they had nearly forgotten, and made the change in the girl they had called sister so much

more apparent. Surely this could never be Berthy sitting on the arm of her brother's chair, her foot swinging in such an easy, careless manner, one hand holding on to the back of the chair, and the other toying with an expensive watch chain that was dangling from her belt.

They knew why their aunt had always disliked Berthy so much; but as they looked at her now, in a neatly-fitting dark blue dress, with its trimmings of cardinal velvet, her eyes sparkling with merriment, her parted lips showing a line of white teeth, they wondered that they had ever considered her homely; yet they had, for Kathey had said many times, "There is no use trying the effect of nice clothes on Berthy, for they seem to be thrown away." What was it then that had wrought this change?

As if in answer to her thoughts, Berthy caught sight of her brother's arm, "Oh, Charley," she said, "Where is the sling for your arm?" "I 'slung' it away so I could hug my new sister," he said, as he put his arm around her.

Kathey knew by the light in the dark face that those words of love and endearment were what she had needed all her life to bring out not only the beauty of her face but the glow of soulful interest in everything that was good and noble, and she chided herself that she had allowed the little, motherless girl to starve in her very presence, when a word of kindness or love would have been to her as daily food.



CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.



THE morning of Thanksgiving Day was ushered in with the storm that Mr. McDonell had predicted. Sometime in the night the wind rose to a gale, the air turning cold so rapidly that when the rain began to fall fine, sharp snow flakes came with it, filling the air with a driving hurricane that was blinding to meet and clinging to everything it touched.

"Where is Wiggins?" said Harold, as he met the family at breakfast, "I want to congratulate him on the prompt arrival of the storm he forecast."

Mr. McDonell enjoyed the joke, but said, "I guess I am the only one to be congratulated, for if this weather keeps up I am afraid your party to-night will not have a very large attendance."

"Oh," said Kathey, "the young people will all be here, it is the horses that are to be pitied in a time like this."

"Who are they that have to be met at the depot?" asked Harold.

"Signor Selaska at twelve o'clock, and Aunt McDonell and Geraldine at seven," was the answer. "They wrote me that they would not come any sooner, as they could not leave the city until this morning. Geraldine has only the chance of two holidays—to-day and to-morrow."

There was a world of preparation to be made late the night before; an express box had arrived for Charley. He did not tell the girls it had come; for, as he said on making it known to them now, he was afraid Berthy would become so excited she would not be able to sleep. They all knew what the box contained, for the first day Berthy arrived at Lake View Edith took her away to her own room and said to her: "There will be a party here Thanksgiving night, and as all of the guests will be paying you more attention than usual on account of the change that has come to you I would like to have you look as nice as you can. Now, what are you going to wear?"

"Oh! Edith, take me in hand, you know I cannot think of anything that would be suitable."

But there was very little time, and she must have a dress; so, after consulting Kathey and Charley, the girls had gone to the city, a distance of about twenty-five miles, and had a day of shopping that had resulted in an abundance of parcels being brought home with them and four or five dresses left at the head dress-making establishment, to be sent to Lake View as soon as completed. Accordingly the box had arrived, but Grace declared she would have slept better if she had known the dresses were in the house;

for she was afraid they would not come, as dress-makers were so apt to disappoint their customers. Charley enjoyed the novelty of opening the box with all the female members of the household gathered around him; even the servants, after supplying the necessary hammer and hatchet, thought they had a right to inspect the contents. One after another of the nobby costumes were taken out and commented upon. Madam Larrilard had pinned a little note to each garment to tell how a change could be made if needed.

First, he pulled out a dark green cloth travelling suit trimmed with mink fur, and a neat brown walking dress with a natty little jacket to match; then a grey flannel trimmed with bands of black velvet ribbon, and cut steel buttons; the next was a pretty, plain black-silk dress, the only one Charley had suggested (what man does not like to see a woman dressed in black silk?); but the crowning feature of the whole was a dress carefully fastened to the side of the box with tapes, a garnet velvet trimmed with ruchings of the same shade of silk, the front of the waist prettily draped with cream lace.

Berthy's eyes sparkled as she saw these beautiful dresses displayed for her admiration and approval, but when the girls all, with one voice, asked her to try them on one after the other, until they saw how each one become her, she cast on her brother such a look of entreaty, that he knew in a moment what it meant, and said quickly, with perhaps a little sarcasm: "You do not know Berthy if you think she likes to be looked at, even to have her clothes admired; but I

hope that she will overcome her bad opinion of her own personal appearance as she gets older, and knows how blind the eyes of love are." By the time all the finery had been carried upstairs and the empty box disposed of luncheon was announced, and all went into the dining room, where, to their surprise, they found already at the table, not only Signor Selaska, whom they expected to meet, but no less a personage than Aunt Elizabeth. When her nieces greeted her and expressed their surprise, that lady explained that she was sure she would find them all at Lake View, so she had come here for a few days, while Mr. Smith went to Summerville to secure a house as they expected to make that village their future home. She had arrived on the same train with the Professor, and finding the Huntington carriage in waiting they came at the same time. There were no more questions asked or answered now, the foreign gentleman being the centre of attraction for the time being; but later in the day when all the family were gathered in the drawing room, Adolphus having taken the signor into the library to make some enquiries concerning England, where he had lately been travelling, Grace said to her aunt, "I suppose your husband will visit old friends in Summerville until you meet him there."

Mrs. Smith seemed delighted that the subject was again mentioned, and spreading out the folds of her new brown satin dress skirt (probably a present from Theodore) said, "I think he has no acquaintances in the village, so he will probably remain at the hotel

until I arrive. He thinks of buying a lot and building a house. It was my choice to live in Summerville, for I always liked the place and people, with a few exceptions. Of course, I will expect to go in a better class of society when I return, and very likely that of itself will cause some jealousy, as it always does. A person must expect those things, it is the price of success," and the lady leaned back in her chair and heaved a sigh at the depravity of human nature. A visible smile went around the room that threatened each moment to break into an audible laugh, and Harold hastened to enquire what business Mr. Smith expected to go into in the village.

"Oh," said Mrs. Smith, quickly, "his means are all invested in a Colorado land association, and the interest is all he expects to use," and she added, "he may not like the place, it never looks very well to a stranger, you know."

Mr. McDonell thought she had furnished enough amusement for the company and said, impatiently: "Joshua Smith is not a stranger in Summerville."

"Joshua! did you say; my husband's name is Theodore," and she said it with so much emphasis that it ought to have ended all controversy, but it did not.

The old man said with equal vehemence, "then his name is Theodore Joshua, for he is the same man that lived there five years ago, and his wife and little boy are buried there. We all knew him. If you want further proof, ask Charley, he knew him well in Colorado."

She had risen to her feet, and now faced him. He could not help but feel sorry for her, though she was in her pride getting ready to trample under her feet every one in her native village less favored than she supposed herself to be.

But he answered quietly, "Your husband went to Colorado a few months before I did, and it was through him that my uncle found out that I was his brother's son, and therefore I have always felt very grateful to Theodore for his kindness."

He said this last to set her at ease, but it was of no use; she stared at him as one in a dream, the exultation in her face dying out and giving place to a look of mingled disgust and despair. All the terrible things she herself had said, and all she had heard others say of him, seemed ringing in her ears. For, with the memory of that little house on the commons, and the recollection that it was Harold that had given him the money to take him away, came the words of the villagers who hoped he would never come back again. All this came to her in a rush of feeling, that was so overwhelming, she could only drop back into her chair and, covering her face with her hands exclaim: "Have I married Josh Smith?"

The storm instead of abating had increased in violence. At about four o'clock it was almost impossible to see a few yards in advance. Fortunately no guests were expected on that train, but Kathey was worrying about the later trip at seven. Harold had

just returned from the stables, where he had given the coachman orders to blanket the horses well, when the girl appeared at the sitting room door and said: "There is a gentleman in the hall who wants to see you. He is almost frozen, I believe." Harold hurried away to ascertain who the unlucky mortal was, and, to his surprise, he encountered in the veritable snow-man at the door Roger McDonell.

When he had parted with Ray at the depot one week ago, he did not know when he would be able to see her again.

He had her promise to be his wife, but he could not ask her "to name the day," for he knew his salary was not sufficient to support a wife as he felt she had a right to be supported. Rachel was willing to wait any length of time, feeling sure their love for each other would never grow less by the enforced separation.

But Roger wanted her near him, and knew it would be impossible for her to remain in Philadelphia any longer, and he, too, had a fear that Berthy would persuade her to go to Denver. In the days that followed her departure he grew very gloomy, and felt that in being parted from the object of his affections that life was hardly worth living. The young men in the store noticed it, as did the proprietor, and thinking something had gone wrong said to him: "McDonell, you do not seem as cheerful as usual. What is the matter?"

"Well," said Roger, looking up quickly, "I did not suppose my feelings were so plainly shown by my

manner, but the fact is I have been thinking I would have to make a change. Do not think me ungrateful, but I am not earning enough for my present needs. When I came here four years ago, the salary seemed all I could expect, but now I am twenty-five years old, and although the position I occupy could be filled by anyone for the money you pay to me, and, therefore, I cannot ask for more, still I think I ought to look for something better."

The proprietor arose, and laying his hand on Roger's shoulder, said, in a kind, fatherly tone of voice, "You have more than filled the position you held, and we have been intending to raise your salary, but you seemed so contented and happy that we did not say anything to you about it. But I tell you now if it is more money you want or a change I will see that you have both. We want to send a man to the old country in the spring to look after our interests there and would like to have you go. How does the prospect suit you?"

Roger grasped the hand of his kind employer and told him he would be delighted to remain in his present position, and thanked him for the interest he was taking in him; adding, in his impulsive, straightforward way, that he had always tried to do his duty by him, as he needed his friendship as much as his money.

The man laughed and said: "A fine-looking fellow like you ought not to be friendless or homeless long. There are scores of nice girls who would make you a happy home."

As soon as the words had escaped his lips he saw he had touched a responsive chord, and laughing again heartily said, "I wish you luck, my boy; I know how it is. I was young once myself." This was on the afternoon before Thanksgiving Day and Roger could hardly wait until morning, so anxious was he to see his lady-love and tell her of his good fortune. So on the next day we find him at Lake View covered with snow, having walked from the depot, but with such a warm heart and happy face that the whole house seemed more cheery for his unexpected presence.

The elegant rooms were one blaze of light and color, and every nook and corner was filled with gay, blooming plants, enabling the guests to forget the dreariness of the approaching winter. The bright, pretty costumes of the young ladies, showing in sharp contrast to the black, masculine attire at their side, made a picture at once pleasant and gratifying to host and hostess.

The grand square pianoforte occupied a place in the centre parlor, that on occasions like this there might be an opportunity for the guests not only to hear but to see those who presided.

The professor had favored the company with several very fine selections. Then followed a song by a young lady, which was very much enjoyed.

Charley had heard enough of Roger's voice in the sick room at Mrs. Kenyon's bedside to feel sure that he could sing elsewhere, and told Harold to call upon

him. Roger, always willing to contribute his share to the enjoyment of any company he chanced to be in, selected a piece of music and asked Signor Selaska to play his accompaniment.

As that gentleman took his seat and glanced at the open page before him, he turned to the young man and said in a tone of warning, "It takes a good voice to sing 'The Day Is Done.'"

"I guess I can raise it," said Roger, enjoying the sedate Russian's trepidation.

"And a thorough knowledge of the rules of music," he said, again looking at the reckless aspirant in a way that was intended to intimidate him, if possible.

But Roger failed to take any hint, but said carelessly: "The people are waiting."

The professor struck the piano with the air of one that felt he had done his duty, whatever was the consequence. As the clear voice took up the tune his professorship seemed to be listening rather than playing, but when the first pause came he suddenly remembered himself and threw his whole soul into the work as though oblivious of all around him. There was a perfect stillness in every part of the house. Those who were fortunate enough to be able to appreciate the excellent rendering of the song were spellbound by its magic, and those who could not see any beauty in it were kept silent by the reverent attention of the others.

Near the door was a slight rustle, and Mrs. McDonell and Geraldine appeared. Having arrived late, they were entering the room just as Roger began

singing. Some one thought the ladies were trying to get a nearer view of the gentleman at the piano, and kindly but noiselessly gave them a seat. But they could only see his back as he stood there.

He looked indeed a son that any mother might be proud of, but the old woman sitting there in her rusty silk dress, her cap not all that she would have desired, and gloves not exactly new, did not know that it was *her* son who was holding the refined, intellectual company, as it were, in breathless wonder and admiration with his fine, cultivated voice. Nor did his sister recognize him until the music stopped, and Signor Selaska sprang from the seat and said, in an excited manner: "Tell me whom I have had the pleasure of playing for?"

Roger answered him laughing: "It is Roger McDonell, at your service, sir."

The young people gathered around him, begging for another song, but the professor must enquire where he lived, and scold him for burying himself in a church choir, and tell him over and over again there was a fortune in his voice. All this Geraldine heard, before she realized that perhaps her mother did not know who it was that was creating so much excitement, and then the thought came to her that she might make a scene if she met her son here. So the girl arose, and telling her mother they had better go into the drawing-room, where it was cooler and less crowded, led that lady away before she was aware why it was done. As they were passing through the doorway they met Adolphus. He was not enjoying him-

self very well. That preacher, as he persisted in calling Mr. Montgomery, kept close to the side of Edith, who looked particularly lovely in a white cashmere dress, with corsage bouquet of pale-pink rosebuds, and when he would have attached himself to Grace, he was preceded by a young lawyer from a neighboring town, and so poor Adolphus was nursing his wrath and declaring to himself that he would leave the "*blooming country*" When he met Geraldine and her mother coming out of the parlor he was struck by the lovely face and figure of the young lady.

"Can I do anything for you?" he said, seeing an anxious look on the fair face.

"I am taking my mother to where it is cooler, it is very much crowded in here."

Let me take you to the conservatory," said the gallant Adolphus, offering the old lady his arm. Geraldine was delighted with his courteous attention. She had never met him, but when he had found them a comfortable seat and brought a dish of vanilla ice, he introduced himself as Mr. Huntington's friend, and she was very glad to say she was a cousin to Mrs. Huntington. Now, as the old lady expressed a desire to return to the parlor, her daughter thought she had better tell her who was there, but before she had time to put her thoughts into words they heard some one laughing, and in another moment Roger and Ray came in and looked around for a place to rest and talk. As soon as he saw his mother he rushed to her side, and extending his hand asked her if she knew

him. Perhaps, in the five years they had been parted he had never felt any yearning to see her face, but now, as he looked at her and saw how faded and old she had become in that time, his heart smote him for his neglect of her, and made him feel that in the future he would be more mindful of her than he had been in the past.

As he stood there she looked up helplessly at him, and Geraldine could not repress her tears as she said, "Oh! mother, it is Roger." When he heard his sister's voice he turned quickly, and taking her in his arms kissed her passionately. Mrs. McDonell by this time seemed to realize who it was, and with a little pitiful cry dropped her head on her son's shoulder; he put his strong arms around her, holding her there until she had become quiet, and then said, as he reached his hand toward Geraldine: "I have been selfish and unfeeling to stay away from you both so long."

Adolphus never for a moment forgot his duty as a gentleman, so now he went to the side of Miss Kenyon and offered her his arm, saying: "We will take a walk in the rosecorridor," and together they went out leaving the family by themselves.

Roger felt very conscience stricken, but Geraldine said to him: "We have all acted foolishly in the past, and have learned some valuable lessons; let us not waste time in useless regrets, the past is behind us, and I do not feel that mourning over it will do any good. Tell us, brother, of your life now, it will be more interesting than the blame you are so ready to take on yourself."

It sounded new and strange to him to hear his sister say these things, and the mother realized it, for she said, "O Roger, Geraldine is not like she used to be; she goes to church, and is becoming very religious, and—"

"Mother," he said, interrupting her, "when we had wealth we turned our backs on all that was good and noble, so it is very plain to me that God took the stumbling block out of our way, so we could find His path to walk in."

"And have you joined the Church, too?" said the weak, trembling voice.

"Joining the Church is the least part of my Christian experience. I am trying with God's help to *live* for His glory."

Geraldine pressed the hand she held and said: "I am so glad. I wish we might be together, you could help me to do right, the way seems very dark sometimes."

"I *will* and can help you now."

And he told them of his prospects, and also his great love for Rachel Kenyon, and how she had promised less than two hours ago, to go back with him to Philadelphia as his wife, and he continued: "I will try and make some arrangements so you can go with us."

Just then Adolphus and Rachel returned, and as Mrs. McDonell was so exhausted with the excitement of meeting Roger he persuaded her to retire for the night, and he went with her to her chamber door and asked Nettie to stay by her until she was asleep.

Adolphus had admired Geraldine very much when he first saw her, and now when he returned to the conservatory and found the traces of tears on her sweet face, his heart was completely gone.

They went back to the parlor again just in time to join the procession to the dining room, and he considered himself very fortunate in securing so handsome a partner. As they were leaving the table Charley said to Edith: "Mr. VanArsdale is really very pleasant when you get to know him; I never saw him so agreeable as he is to-night."

The next morning at eight o'clock the family all gathered in the front parlor, where the decorations were still hanging. Signor Selaska sat at the piano, and at a signal began playing Mendelsson's wedding march. In through the ivy-trimmed archway came Roger and Rachel and took their place under a canopy of drooping ferns, followed by Berthy and Geraldine, Adolphus acting the part of best man. The Rev. Mr. Montgomery, with an impressive service, joined together those two loving hearts by the holy marriage ceremony.

Rachel knew she would soon be parted from Berthy, and having no other friend she cared to make her home with, yielded to Roger's passionate entreaty to go back with him. He told her of the lonely week he had passed, of the encouraging words of his employer, and of his present good fortune and future prospects, but most of all of his great need of her companionship. Her own heart yearning for his sympathy and protection, made it seem to her the

right thing to do, and so, without the usual preparations of an elaborate trossseau, the little, modest Quaker maiden was taken into the heart and home of the man that to her was all the world.

"I never performed a marriage ceremony that gave me more pleasure than the one this morning," said Charley as he met Harold in the hall, after the congratulations were over and the happy couple were preparing to depart on their journey. "They seemed to belong to each other."

Harold laughed, and putting his hand on his friend's side said, "How does the old bachelor's heart feel after witnessing the happiness of this other man?"

"Happiness for myself has always been a secondary thought with me. To a man like you, where everything seemed to fall into your outstretched hands, *my* life may seem a little hard, but I have been so accustomed to bringing happiness to others that I forget sometimes that I ever had a human heart to satisfy. Roger's supreme delight this morning, I suppose, is only a faint reflection of what yours was on a similar occasion."

"By the way, Charley," said Harold quickly, not replying to his friend's last remark, "I want to ask you before you go away what it was I did to offend you when we were together in Summerville five years ago. I knew you were angry with me about something, but never could surmise what it was."

Charley laughed, but did not answer until his friend spoke again and said: "My wife told me never to mention it to you, for she was afraid it would result

in a renewal of the old feud. She is immensely fond of you, and said only yesterday that she hoped we might always be friends."

He was looking at Charley earnestly as he said this, perhaps fearing he *had* made a mistake in alluding to the misunderstanding of the past. But he need not have made himself uneasy on that score, as the confused manner of his friend led him to think there had really been no grounds for the coolness that had come between them. Yet he was anxious to know what it was, and waited for the answer he felt he had a right to expect. Charley knew Harold well enough to be sure he would not let the matter rest, now he had commenced the subject, until it was all explained; so he threw back his head with the look of one at bay and said:

"Well, if there is no getting around it, I will tell you plainly that I thought it was Edith you married."

"Whew-ew-ew," said Harold, and then burst into a loud laugh. "And when did you find out the difference?"

"Not until I went to Hill-Crest to find Berthy."

His friend looked sober and said: "Oh! that is too bad. And all those five years you nursed your wrath?"

"No, no, I was not mad at all, but just thought as I always have that you were the fortunate one, and tried to wish you all the happiness in the world; but you cannot wonder that I did not feel like receiving letters from you sounding the praises of the only woman I had ever loved and realizing that she was

another man's wife. There, I have made a full confession," he added, laughing, "are you satisfied?"

Harold was going to speak, but at just that moment the subject of their remarks ran down the stairs and turned into the library. Harold caught her by the arm and said, "Charley wants you," at the same time giving his friend a look of mischievous intelligence, and walked away.

Edith turned an unsuspecting face to Mr. Montgomery, who said quickly (not wanting to give his benedict friend the satisfaction of thinking he had left him in a predicament), "That queen cactus we were looking at yesterday is going to bloom soon. Come with me and see if you think it will to-night." As they passed Harold on their way to the conservatory he said to Edith, "Perhaps you will find a king out there instead of a queen."

"It is a queen *I* am looking for," said Charley, and closed the door before Harold could reply.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, the bridal party were ready to take their leave of Lake View.

Roger and his "wee wifie" had persuaded Geraldine to go with them to their new home, her brother having written himself to tell her employer she would not return to the store. When Adolphus heard this arrangement he decided he would go with them, as he had always admired the city of Philadelphia very much.

Mrs. McDonell would stay at Lake View until her daughter's return. Roger said to her when bidding

her good-bye: "Perhaps, mother, there are better days in store for us than we have ever known, not in a worldly sense, but in the sense of having earned our share of prosperity, coming up as we have out of great tribulation." The old lady could not rejoice in his present circumstances as a mother would who had done all in her power to encourage and help him to a higher life, and was therefore the more to be pitied; that she knew she had no right to share this prosperity which he, in his unselfish devotion, was willing to bestow on her. She did not speak, but sighed heavily when Signor Selaska congratulated her on her son's talent and fine voice.

There was a great deal of merriment when the carriage came around to take the happy couple away. Grace and one of the other girls, who had come in to see them off, provided themselves with enough rice and old shoes to express the good luck they wished in their hearts would attend them through life.

Berthy tried to keep cheerful, but when she bade Ray good-bye her courage gave way at the parting with her cousin, and they wept in each other's arms.

When the carriage had driven away, Charley took his sister into the back parlor for, he said, he had something to tell her that he hoped would reconcile her somewhat to the parting with Rachel. When they were seated he said to her: "I have been thinking that it was too bad to take you away from all of the girls you so long loved as your sisters, and I realize that you can hardly think of me as a brother, we have only been together a few weeks."

"But I do," said Berthy, "I don't want you to think that I am going to feel lonely with you ; but Ray and myself have been such good friends, and then it is such a long way from my home to hers we shall never see each other again," and her voice was choked with sobs.

"Do not say that little sister it is only a short ride on an express train, and now you have the money to travel with, I will expect to see you come into my study any morning and say : "I am going to run across to Philadelphia to-day, have you any word to send ?"

She could not help but laugh at the pleasant picture her brother had drawn, and dried her eyes as she looked into his happy face, and asked if that was what he intended to tell her.

"No," he said, "I have asked Edith to go to Denver with us, how does that suit you ?"

"I would rather have Grace, why did you not ask her ?"

"Well," said her brother, looking down, "I did not feel that it would be quite right to ask her, for I had nothing to offer her for the sacrifice she would have to make in leaving her home."

"And what have you offered Edith to pay her for going ?" said his sister, looking at him in innocent wonder, he enjoyed her surprise as he said: "Oh ! I have offered her all I have to give anyone on earth—my home, my fortune and my heart." Just for a moment she wondered what could he mean, and then threw her arms around his neck and exclaimed : "Oh

Charley, you mean you are going to marry her. I am so glad ; you will both be so happy, I know." He then told her how long he had loved Edith, and how this morning she had told him she would be his wife, and go with him to his Western home, making him happy by saying she, too, had loved him all the years he had been thinking of her as the wife of another man.

There is little more to tell. When Charley Montgomery asked Mr. McDonell for his daughter's hand the old man smiled and said, "Would you be taking another of my girls ?" but added, more soberly, "there is not a man on earth that I would sooner see her marry than the son of my old friend. You are very much like him, a little more of a gentleman perhaps, but no better at heart, if you are a preacher.

THE END.